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RECENT LAND REFORM IN IRAN AND CUBA: COMPARISON OF A CAPITALIST AND A SOCIALIST CASE.

by

FATEMEH P. GHORAYSHI

©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT..SOCIOLOGY.....

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Land reform measures in Iran from 1962 are compared with the land reforms in Cuba begun in 1959.

Three stages of land reform are described in Iran, initiated in 1962, 1963 and 1969. The limited changes introduced by the Shah's Government tended to favour larger and wealthier residents in the villages. A new class of "kulaks" has developed. Those absentee landlords whose lands were re-distributed were compensated by means of stocks in industrial enterprises. Peasants with small holdings, and the numerous class of landless rural workers, these groups (constituting up to one-half of the village population) received little additional land.

The net effect of the Iranian reforms has been to weaken the feudal elements in the countryside, and to strengthen capitalistic agriculture. At the same time, the class struggle between small farmers, sharecroppers and landless laborers, on the one side, and the richer farmers on the other hand - this struggle has been intensified. Many of the poorer peasants have migrated into the cities in search of work.

In Cuba, the large estates were confiscated. About four-fifths of the confiscated lands were turned into large-scale state farms. The rest was given to those farmers whose holdings were below 165 acres, to bring them up to a "vital minimum". The first stage of Cuban land reform left 44 per cent of the land in the hands of the State; the second stage (1963) brought the holdings of the State to 60 per cent. The socialist sector undertook to modernize agriculture in the context of a national plan. Productivity was increased; technology was improved;

sugar and cattle were the main industries. No drift of surplus rural workers to the cities has occurred. Workers are employed on the State farms, while new services such as education and health are taken out into the countryside.

Though many problems remain in Cuba, land reform has been highly successful. By contrast, land reform in Iran has failed to resolve the basic contradictions in Iranian social structure. The reasons are briefly discussed.

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Chapter I

THE PROBLEM AND THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES

There is always this question, why is such a large part of the world living in poverty? For example, in 1950 the underdeveloped areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America which had 67.8 per cent of the world population possessed only 18.5 percent of the world income. The average American citizen had thirty times as much income at his disposal to spend on himself as the average Asian. And why is this situation getting worse?

There are external and internal reasons. The external reasons derive from the imperialist relationships between rich and poor countries.

In 1966, average income per capita was $3110 in North America and $100 in Asia and Africa. Trade between rich and poor countries reported in the following table can be pointed to as another example of the relative positions of rich and poor nations in the world economy.

Table 1

TRADE BETWEEN RICH AND POOR COUNTRIES: 1953 & 1969 ($billion)

	1953	%	1969	%
Rich to rich	29	46.03	138	63.01
Rich to poor	14	22.22	36	16.43
Rich to rich	15	23.80	35	15.98
Poor to poor	5	7.93	10	4.56
Total	63	99.98	219	99.98

Source: Duley Seers & Leonard Joy, Development in a Divided World, 1970.

My intention in this thesis is to examine the internal, not the external sources of underdevelopment.

I have approached these questions by taking two cases, one socialist and one capitalist: Cuba and Iran.

The reason why I have chosen Iran among so many developing capitalist countries is because I as an Iranian am more aware of what goes on in this country than in any other countries. After being outside Iran for quite a while, I found most of the people I came across did not know what is really going on in Iran. I felt responsible, and thought perhaps this study may be of some help.

Why, however, I have chosen to examine Cuba and not for example, China? The answer is that with the short period of time I have for writing my M.A. thesis, the smallness of Cuba would allow me to study it more intensely than would have been possible for a larger country.

What is of major interest to me in this study is not the comparison of these two countries on the whole, rather, the focus of my study is the comparison between two different procedures of land reform which were promulgated in both countries after their respective revolutions.

In 1959 the Cuban Revolution took place, and in 1963 the Shah of Iran started the so called "White Revolution". These two countries had chosen different procedures to solve the problem of their underdevelopment, and both labelled these approaches with the name of "Revolution".

This comparison involves contrasting a land reform which

took place through a capitalistic revolution in 1963, with a land reform that was promulgated through socialist revolution in 1959.

The comparative approach to land reform entails both advantages and disadvantages.

The major disadvantage is that Iran and Cuba have dissimilar economic, political and ideological structures which affect land reform attempts in different ways. I kept this fact in mind during the analysis.

The advantage of the comparative approach derived from the broader perspective that it allowed me to obtain of the different factors involved in the procedures of land reform. It allowed me to see more clearly the reasons for the success of the land reform in Cuba and for its failure in Iran. The comparative approach allowed me to see the overall difference of social structures on the time, rate and method of introducing and implementing of land reform. The comparison of these two cases make it possible to show the extent to which the promulgation of land reform may differ in different social relations.

Since I could not evaluate all the major programs of these two Revolutions, i.e., land reform, education, health, social services, and so on, I chose to deal with the program that was most significant, that is land reform.

I felt that concentration on land reform was important for the following reasons:

1. Rural underdevelopment in both Iran and Cuba was prior to the revolution in both countries very severe. Both had bipolar class structures, and land was concentrated

in the hands of big landowners. The property relations determined the bipolar class structure, and as a result the power relations in the countryside of both societies. This kind of property relations had its impact on the patterns of income, wealth distribution, social conditions, and so on.

With regard to the above points, land reform could be a very promising program for bringing development and better living to the countryside.

2. As is the case in many developing countries, agriculture was the largest economic sector in both Iran and Cuba. The rural populace was the largest and the most underpriviledged.

Land reform, to deal with the most crucial problems of this stratum of society, could be very important.

3. Both Iranian and Cuban Revolutions put emphasis on their land reform program and claimed this program was the most crucial and successful one.

In short, I want to see which of these two kinds of land reform was best able to foster development in the countryside.

Clarifying what I mean by development is a very difficult problem. In dealing with this question it is useful to recognize the inadequacy of explanations of development which are provided by most liberal scholars. They do not conceive of development in terms of a social totality. What they mean by development is simply a combination of given factors of production, such as: land, population, capital, technology, etc. Although these factors are relevant

no mention is made of the exploitation of the majority which underlies all development prior to socialism. They do not analyze the effect of class on the operation of the mode of production. No attention is paid to the way in which the factors of production and the relations of production combine to form a distinctive social system. Lastly, no mention is made of imperialism as the logical extension of capitalism.

My purpose is to discover the major characteristics of these two land reforms: to see to what extent land reform succeeded in transforming the class structure of rural society, to determine which class benefited the most, and to find the extent to which land reform ameliorated the social conditions of the rural populace. And I like to see how much was the program of land reform conditioned by the legal, social, political and economic structure of the country, and finally, which one successfully achieved the goals set by their revolution.

I had access to the following sources for my study:

1. Iranian and Cuban Government Publications.
2. Iranian periodicals, journals and papers in Persian and English.
3. Cuban periodicals, journals, and papers in English and French.
4. United Nations publications.
5. Existing literature on Cuba and Iran (In Persian, English and French).
6. By corresponding with a few people in the Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Glascow in

Scotland.

There were some limitations as far as time and collection of data was concerned. I found it difficult to find reliable and organized data on Iran. The government data and as a result United Nation's data on Iran which is based on government reports, is almost totally unreliable since it is not in the interest of the present regime to make the situation plain. Therefore, in this case, I had to rely on my own knowledge, on the knowledge of the Iranians who have experienced life in rural Iran and on studies published in western journals and literatures.

And for the case of Cuba, I shall say it was almost as difficult to get organized information either from the government of Cuba or from United Nation's publications. Therefore I had to rely on the huge number of studies which is done on Cuba, by different groups and individuals with different views and approaches. And finally, my view of Cuba is the result of study of the existing Cuban literature and of correspondence with the people involved in Cuban studies who had spent some time in Cuba.

In the first chapter I try to show what the problem is, and how I am going to approach it.

In chapter II and IV I give a short history of both countries and the existing social conditions of the people up to the time of the revolutions. By these chapters I intend to provide a sufficient background for an understanding the respective historical and social situations. I give a simple outline of the past history of these countries, and try to show how both of these existing systems came to power. Finally I deal with the social conditions of the people

in Cuba and Iran before the revolution.

In chapters III and V I deal in detail with land reform. I describe agriculture, modes of production, and types of land ownership that existed before land reforms in these two countries. After discussing the different programs and procedures of land reform, I will evaluate its influence on agriculture, the modes of production, types of ownership and the social conditions which existed in both countries after their revolutions.

Finally in chapter VI I summarize the nature of these two land reforms and show why one was successful and the other was not.

Chapter II

IRAN

Political Background

In order to understand the socio - economic changes of Iran it is necessary to know an outline of its recent political history.

The history of Iran over the past 2500 years can be summed up in Bahman Nirumand's words "the history of Iran reveals a single theme with variations: a period of prosperity and expansion under a newly arisen ruler, decay of a declining dynasty accompanied by terror, and the conquest of power by a new ruling family or by foreign invaders."[1]

Periods of economic prosperity were followed by periods of economic ruin due to waves of foreign invasion. The most destructive of these invasions was the rule of the Mongols, from the 13th to 15th century.

After the sea passage to India was discovered Persia[2] was on the direct line of all international trade routes. The British in 1845-65 increased their export-import trade via the Persian Gulf. The flood of manufactured goods from Western Europe and Russia prevented the development of a native Iranian industry, and branches of production that already existed, were slowed down.

The story of modern Iran starts in the 19th century. This

period is marked by the efforts of European colonizing powers to gain influence in Persia. During the 18th and 19th century Persia came under repeated pressure from the English, the Russians and the French under Napoleon.

Between 1800 and 1828 disastrous campaigns against Russia took place. In 1813, Persia was forced to renounce forever her claims to Georgia and other Caucasian provinces by the treaty of Golestan.

By the treaty of Turkmanchai in 1828, Persia surrendered all of the territory west of the Caspian Sea, north of the present boundary with Russia. Persia also agreed to an idemnity of about three million pounds sterling and signed a separate trade and security agreement which limited the duty on Russian imports to five per cent. The agreement granted free entry to goods for official use and allowed Russia the right to protect her Persian employees by means of extraterritorial privileges for Russian subjects in Persia. It also promised to maintain no ships in the Caspian. [3]

In 1857 Persia relinquished all claims in Afghan territory and granted capitulatory rights and commercial priveleges to Great Britain. By 1864, Russia had completed her conquests of territory west of the Caspian Sea and nine years later, in 1873, had completed similar conquests of practically independent areas east of the Caspian.

Up to this time, the British had two principal objectives in Persia: first, to establish and expand British trade; and second, to defend British possessions in India. The Russian objective was to extend her territorial possessions.

From about 1870 to 1906, Anglo Russian military pressure was replaced by economic and commercial rivalry. Serious economic rivalry with Russia was initiated by the grant in 1872 to a British subject, Baron de Reuter, of a comprehensive, countrywide monopoly. The latter included railway construction, mining and banking. But, the forceful way in which the Russians expressed their displeasures gave the Shah pause and when he reached London, the real surprise came in the city's lack of enthusiasm for Baron Reuter's plans. This was enough to make the Shah pay attention to his subjects' opposition to the scheme and on his return home the concession was cancelled. But in 1889 the Shah awarded Reuter the right to organize the Imperial Bank of Persia, a commercial bank with limited privilege-of-note-issue. This concession led to Russian demands for a railroad concession from the frontier to Tabriz, a Caspian Sea fisheries monopoly; and for concession to construct a toll road from the Russian frontier to Tabriz. These demands were granted and developed. In 1901 the Shah granted a British subject, William Knox D'Arcy, an oil concession covering the entire country, with the exception of the five northern provinces adjacent to Russia.

Each of these concessions called for some down payments to the Shah, plus a share of the prospective benefit. The Shah's motive in granting concessions was not based on benefits or damages to Persian society, but on the amount of revenue he could personally derive from them. But it was, of course, ultimately the Persian people who paid for the damages and the Shah's loans which by now, equalled the government's total revenue for one year.

In the meantime, forces pressing for reform were becoming focused. In 1896, Naseru d-Din Shah was assasinated. The new Shah Muzafferu'd-din Shah (1896-1906) was an invalid who spent most of his time on trips to Europe. In order to pay for his travel he borrowed money from foreign countries in exchange for concessions which were economically harmful to the country. When some merchants of Tehran were given a sentence of corporal punishment in 1905, the people's resentment of corrupt Minister exploded. A large proportion of the Muslim clergy also added their powerful support to the "constitutional" movement. Eventually, in 1906, the Shah was forced by a popular revolution to concede the election of a Constitutional Assembly or Parliament. Majlis-i-Shura-yi-melli, the "national Consultative Assembly", known in short as "Majlis". In 1908 intolerant of the Constitution and other restrictions, the Shah ordered the bombardment of the Parliament building, and this led to an actual revolution, which was supported by many influential clergies and the powerful nomadic tribe of Bakhtiari. The revolution was victorious, deposed the Shah, and placed on the throne his infant son Ahmad Shah (1909-1925).

In 1907, an Anglo-Russian agreement divided the country into three zones. The English zone was in the South, the Russian in the North; the central zone was neutral.

Oil was discovered in the "neutral zone" of Persia in 1908. In order to prevent the Russians from coming to the southwest where the oil was, British left the Russians free to do as they pleased in the northwest.

The First World War changed the situation. Iran declared

neutrality, but did not have the power to enforce it. Iran became a battlefield between Ottomans and Russians, British and Germans.

During and after the battle for the constitution, Iran reached the lowest point of decadence. Central government almost collapsed. Local chieftains, large landowners, and tribal khans became virtually independent rulers in their own areas, various political groupings had emerged. There were revolts in different parts of the country. The period between 1906 and 1921 were years of insecurity, the power of the foreigners, and the bad example of greedy native leaders. The country's political structure fell into disunity.

In 1921, there were three potential unifiers of Iran: Kuchik Khan in Gilan, Colonel Mohammad Taghi in Khurasan, and a Cossak officer named Reza Khan.

The coup d'etat of Sayyid Zia and Colonel Reza Khan took place in February 1921. By April, 1921, Sayyid Zia lost, and Reza Khan gained the post of Minister of War. Naming himself Commander-in-Chief, he entrenched his position behind the throne by monopolizing the means of organized violence (the army, the police, and the gendarmerie). In October, 1923, he became Prime Minister. By 1925, he felt strong enough to emerge from behind the throne, topple the old ruling family and crowned himself Shah-in-Shah (king of kings).[4] The existing Pahlavi dynasty was founded by Reza Shah - the father of the present Shah.

The army held a dominant position throughout the reign of Reza Shah. He increased the defense budget five fold, expanded the army from 40,000 to 112,000, awarded the officers high salaries,

sold them state domains at normal prices, and offered them high positions. In a very short time, he organized a strong army, created a central authority, appealed to the clergy, gained control of the cabinet, and manipulated the Majlis.

The rise of Hitler and anti-Communism encouraged Reza Shah to make his dictatorship more effective. He brought advisers from Germany; a council for the "Nurture" of thought was formed.

Under Reza Shah, a new aristocracy came into being. A new class of rich man grew up, many of them senior army officers whom the Shah favoured. He carefully handpicked suitable "yes men". Whoever opposed him or lost his confidence was cast into provincial obscurity, into foreign exile, into court on charges of corruption, or into prison, or into execution cells. The series of political murders and persecutions throws light upon Reza Shah's characteristic.

The life of Reza Shah is an excellent example of leaders in the long history of Iran who have done some good things, but who have also done the country a great deal of harm because they have taken all powers into their own hands.

During the years of his reign he established a centralized bureaucracy, a modern army, built the railroads and introduced a new order into education. Like Kemal Ataturk in Turkey, Reza Shah put through a number of reforms which resulted in temporary progress, but were too superficial to bring about any lasting improvement. The principal task of restructuring the feudal society remained undone.

In 1921 Soviet Russia annuled all the Russo-Persian treaties, thereby restoring tranquility in the north of the country. During

Reza Shah's reign it seemed Iran was not after all, any longer so vital to imperial strategy. Reza Shah had the oppurtunity of experiencing less influence and less pressure from Britain and Russia, as compared with the earlier Qajar period. In the 1930's, he fostered close relations with Germany.

In 1940 and 1941, Iran became again vital to Great Britain and her Allies; drastic action had to be taken. At the beginning of World War II, Reza Shah declared his country neutral and refused to give in to British and Soviet pressures to expell German technicians and propagandists living in Iran. In August, 1941, British and Soviet forces invaded Iran, took control of the government, and forced Reza Shah to abdicate in favor of his son.

For the four years of World War II, the old powers reasserted themselves. The landlords, the tribal chiefs, and the religion leaders regained some of their old strength.[5] The progressive intellectuals of the country joined either Mossadegh's National Front or the Communist Tudeh Party.

Another main issue was the question of oil concession, and annulment of the treaty of 1901 increasingly became a national problem. The British owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had, since 1905, held monopoly rights over the oil fields. The National Front, along with other nationalist groups, felt the concession to be an infringement on Iranian sovereignty.

Up to the year of nationalization, poverty and famine shook the land, especially outside the capital. The disproportion between the people's poverty and the continuous rise of oil output in Iran was too blatant.

By 1951, the National Front was strong enough to bring Mossadegh to power; he was elected Prime Minister by Parliament by a large majority.

A bill nationalizing the oil industry was finally introduced in Parliament in April, 1951, and on May 1, 1951 the oil industry was nationalized. From the beginning the British took a strong line against the nationalizations. Nonetheless, in 1952 their suit was denied by the International Court of Justice at the Hague.

The struggle over the oil fields brought in the United States as an "impartial" mediator between two disputing parties, Britain and Iran. The United States was not successful in this role. The position of both countries remained inflexible: Mossadegh would not relent on the principle of nationalization, and the British would not agree to a 50-50 profit-sharing formula.

The British then called for a boycott on Iranian oil and an embargo on the sale of goods to Iran. Soon the economy of Iran began to suffer. Worried by the specter of a communist take-over in Iran, as early as July, 1951, the United States told Iranians that America would not grant any more economic aid until Iran reached an agreement with Britain. Therefore, Mossadegh's urgent request for financial aid in May 28, 1953 was turned down by Eisenhower.

Mossadegh resolved to structure the Iranian economy so it could function without oil revenues. In 1952, Mossadegh had introduced a bill in Parliament granting him additional powers and transferring the supreme command of the army from the Shah to the government. Mossadegh became so powerful that in August 17, 1953 the Shah accompanied by his queen had to leave the country and went to Rome.

The British finally came to this conclusion that no satisfactory solution could be achieved for the oil conflict as long as Mossadegh was in power. By August 19, 1953 the tide had turned completely the other way. The C.I.A. stepped in and with its help Mossadegh was overthrown in August 19, 1953. By the 22nd of August the Shah was back. The Eisenhower administration soon announced that it would allocate $45 million in emergency aid to Iran; aid totalled $127.3 million for the fiscal year 1954. An additional $5 million a month in aid for the next three years was allocated.

With the fall of Mossadegh, the Shah regrouped his forces and immediately began constructing a political cadre of unquestioned and unquestioning loyalty. Since 1953, the Shah has ruled as commander-in-chief of the army. Military expenditures have gone up drastically during the last twenty years. The annual defense budget has expanded from $60 million in 1953, to almost $1 billion in 1973. And the loans negotiated abroad for arms have jumped from a mere $10 million in 1941-1953 to $700 milliom between 1953-1965.[6]

The Americans, along with the Israelis (who needed Iranian oil) in 1957 formed and trained the Iranian secret police called by its Persian acronym SAVAK. The organization is for the control of the political opinion and the press. As Frances Fitzgerald points out: "SAVAK has agents in the lobby of every hotel, in every government department, and in every university classroom. In the provinces, the SAVAK runs a political intelligence gathering service, and abroad it keeps a check on every Iranian student. Private estimates put the number of SAVAK agents at 70,000- or approximately one for every 450 Iranians...people simply disappear in Iran, and

disappearance goes unrecorded." [7]

After Mossadegh was overthrown, the Shah wanted to get rid of the opposition. The members of Mossadegh's Cabinet and of the National Front were hauled into court, and thousands of them were thrown into jail. A number of Tudeh party's members were executed or imprisoned. In 1953, many politicians were arrested and shot. In 1954, paratroops stormed the University of Tehran. In 1955, troops attacked demonstrating high-school students. In 1961, demonstration of teachers demanding high wages was crushed, with one death. In 1962, police again stormed the University of Tehran; 800 students were injured. On January 24, 1963, all the leaders of the Iranian National Front were arrested. Riots and demonstrations were rising continuously.

In the meantime, in the countryside, which had more than 75 per cent of the total population, people were living in poverty and destitution. In the following paragraphs I will try to give a short summary of their social conditions.

Synopsis of Socio-economic Conditions in the Countryside

The Iranian peasant is forced to go to debt to his landlord or the village money lender for a variety of reasons. If he has borrowed from his employer, it will be deducted together with interest, from his pay. In poor crop years his earnings are not enough to cover his indebtedness and he becomes a permanent debtor of his landlord or of rural merchants. Besides, the Iranian peasant has to pay the village priest, perform corvée, and statute labor with teams for the landowner.

After all taxes and other obligations to his landlord are deducted, the Iranian peasant receives hardly enough to support himself and his family. The peasant family has an income between 46.50 dollars to 133.00 dollars per year. [8]

The Iranian peasant is constantly in need of money for his daily expenses, so he falls into the hands of money lenders. In many regions the weaving of rugs and carpets was an important additional source of income for peasant families. Child labor was especially common in this industry.

Being in the lowest income category, the peasants were thus perpetually in a state of semi-starvation. "To the list of these conditions must be added the absence of health care in rural areas, where infant mortality was close to 50 per cent. Illiteracy averaged about 85 percent among the population 10 years old and over." [9]

There is widespread malnutrition in rural areas. The average calorie intake is the same as that of India - and the rural people suffer from all the diseases that come with such conditions.

Nearly every village had been relatively overpopulated; there was disguised unemployment; and many redundant labourers eked out the barest existence on land where their labour was needed only at the peak of agricultural seasons.

The lot of the majority was destitution, and except for their attachment to the land, there was little else to distinguish them from the urban proletariat.

Late in February, 1949, after the violence and upheaval of the 1940's culminated in an attempt on the life of the Shah, he went to the United States to ask for economic help. Instead, he was told

to begin refrom.

At that time, his political situation was uncertain. He needed cash money more than land; he also was looking for a way to strengthen his personal position and gain support. Therefore he decided to announce a personal reform, and handed down his decree calling for the distribution of royal lands. [10] He sold these lands at a good profit to local peasants over a long term.

With the fall of Mossadegh in 1953, it was soon discovered that a large number of young army officers had been influenced by the Tudeh party. There was practically no communication between the Shah and these people, some of whom belonged to Tudeh and some to the National Front. [11] They held demonstrations, published clandestine literature, and carried on strikes in colleges and high schools. Most of them, however, did not belong to any organized group. They had simply lost confidence in their own government.

The Shah and political elite were pressed to develop a policy fundamentally different from the personal gesture made by the Shah in 1951. The Shah sought a way to show them that his policy included that for which they were clamoring. As a result, he thought of a reform program. The land reform bill was taken to the Majlis (Parliament) in 1960, but approval was blocked by the feudal landlords by whom the Majlis was dominated.

In short, with the coming of the 1960's the professional bureaucratic Intelligentsia had increased in size and power to such a degree that it presented a serious threat to the traditional power patterns. In the meantime, massive poverty and dissatisfaction in rural area was an imminent danger. And by 1963, the threat had become

so great that the government had been seriously weakened. There was grave danger of renewed activity by Communists if measures to remedy or lessen discontent were not taken. Finally the Shah found a way out which for the most part presented the traditional power pattern, and on January 9, 1963 Amini (the Prime Minister) and a few of his ministers signed a bill amending the land reform law of 1960.

In 1963 the Shah announced a six-point program of reform in the name of the "White Revolution", to contrast with past and present revolutions in other parts of the world and in Iran, which had usually been bloody. Afterwards, this date was refered to by government publications as "an important milestone in Iranian history." The original six-points are:

1. Land Reform.
2. Nationalization of forests and pastures.
3. Public sale of state-owned factories to finance land reform.
4. Profit-sharing in industry.
5. Reform of electoral law to include women.
6. Literacy Corps.

Later, six other points were added to the original points:

7. Health Corps.
8. Reconstruction and Development Corps.
9. Rural Courts of Justice.
10. Nationalization of Waterways.
11. National Reconstruction.
12. Educational and administrative revolution.

The twelve points have come to form the Shah's "White Revolution". By introducing this program the power elite started to speak in a revolutionary language. But as Allan Bill phrased it, this was really a program of system preservation.[12]

The political elite has placed the major emphasis upon point

one, land reform, and point six, the literacy corps. Land reform was believed to be the heart of the revolution; upon this point I will focus my studying.

The other programs scarcely exist. Little attention is paid to points two and ten. Point three of this program is to compensate the landlords for the loss of their land. Point five exists only on paper. Point four was resisted by factory owners; and the workers did not grasp its meaning either.

In general all indications suggest the "Revolution" exists only on paper. As Allan Bill points out, it is already called by journalists, a "Forgotten Revolution". [13]

Footnotes

[1] Bahman Nirumand: Iran New Imperialism in Action. N.Y. Monthly Review Press. 1969, p. 17.

[2] The name of the country before Reza Shah's reign. When he came to power he changed it to Iran. Now it is called either Iran or Persia.

[3] Alessandro Baussain: The Persians. Elek Books Limited, 2 All Street, London N1, 1962, p. 165. The only comment of Fath Ali Shah's incompetent minister was: "we are not ducks that we need the water of the Caspian".

[4] Mohammed Mossadegh who after World War II was to become leader of the National Front and nationalize the oil industry, made his first public speech in the parliamentary debate on disposition of the king. He opposed the supersession of the dynasty. Fearing that if the Reza Shah took the throne total power would again be entrusted to one man, and the Constitution would in effect be null and void. In vain he pointed out to Parliament the danger of a military dictatorship. Mossadegh paid for his courageous speech in Parliament with years of banishment.

[5] Local government set up an autonomous regime in Azarbaijan.

[6] Ali Jandaghi: "The Present Situation in Iran." Monthly Review; vol. 25. November 1973.

[7] Frances Fitzgerald: "Giving the Shah Everything He Wants," Harper's; November 1974.

[8] Bahman Nirumand: op. cit., p. 126.

[9] Farhad Khamsi: "Land Reform in Iran." Monthly Review. Vol. 21, No. 2, June 1969. p. 22

[10] These lands had been illegally seized by Reza Shah from their original owners. Mossadegh regarded this as counter to land reform, and it was suspended by him on May 9, 1953, but was revoked by September of that year, immediately after Mossadegh had been overthrown.

[11] The two great recent oppositoin movements were National Front (Mossadegh as the leader), and the Tudeh party. Tudeh Party was Communist oriented and was at its height in the 1940's and 1950's. Teachers and professors dominated the leadership of this Party. It was manned by segments of the professional middle class; students were the catalyst and moving forces. Tudeh party managed to organize emerging industrial workers. Its members attacked the political elite, published newspapers,

organized demonstrations, and etc. This Party was declared illegal when the Shah regained power. The active members were put in jail or executed and the opposition has tickled underground.

[12]James Allan Bill, The Politics of Iran, Bell and Howell Company, 1972.

[13]James Allan Bill, ibid., p. 141

Chapter III

LAND REFORM IN IRAN

1. Characteristics of Iranian agriculture before the land reform program.

a) Agriculture

With the exception of the Caspian littoral, the rest of Iran is high and dry. Agriculture is mostly based on irrigation. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Iranian agriculture became increasingly oriented to national and international markets, and this changed the crop patterns and methods of exploitation in many areas. The countryside remained an area that provided a surplus for cities, but received almost nothing in return. Changes in agriculture and the rise in government taxes actually worsened the position of the peasantry.

b) Types of Land Ownership

1. The large landowner: He owns the land, water, etc., and produces exchange values which are rents collected from sharecroppers, to whom he has given the right to use the land. He is not a cultivator of the land he owns.

In the country as as whole, the dominat form of the land ownership in the 1950's and before, was that of a large state.

The royal families had more than 2,000 villages, 1/25 of the total villages in Iran. Farmanfarma's estates were twice as

large as Belgium; and the Batmanghelij's estate was as big as Switzerland.[1]

Absentee ownership was another characteristic of land-holding in Iran.

Table II

PER CENT OF VILLAGE OWNERSHIP IN IRAN

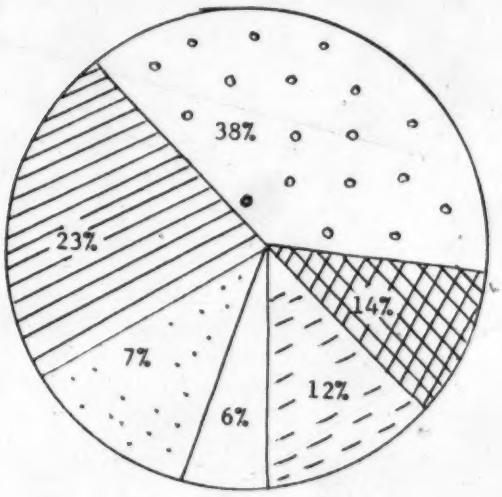
1960-61

Proprietors	Per cent of Villages
State land and crown estates	5
Land belonging to religious institutions	15
Large private estates[2]	65
Peasant ownership	15
Total.....	100

Source: Bahman Nirumand, Iran: New Imperialism in Action. N.Y. Monthly Review Press. p.126.

Figure 1

VILLAGE LAND-HOLDING BEFORE LAND REFORM IN IRAN



Religious

More than 5 villages

Between 1-5 villages

Less than 3 hectares

More than 3 hectares

State owned

Source: Bahman Nirumand, ibid., p. 130

2. Small farmers: they own land and produce exchange values for a commodity market. Either they work the land themselves, in conjunction with their families, or they employ laborers to work for them. Perhaps around 7 per cent of the people who support themselves by working on the land could be included in this category.

About three-fifths of the total population lived off the land (i.e. were engaged in agricultural sector) in Iran in the 1950's.

Table III

CHARACTERISTICS OF LAND HOLDING FOR 93 PER CENT OF THE IRANIAN PEOPLE WHO LIVED OFF THE LAND.

(about 60 percent of total Iranian population-more than 15 million)

Percent of Population	Land ownership
60	owned no land
23	owned less than one hectares
10	owned between 1-3 hectares
7	owned between 3-20 hectares
100 . . . TOTAL	

Source: Farhad Khamsi: Land Reform in Iran. Monthly Review. Vol. 21, no. 2, June 1969.

As is shown in the above table, only seven per cent of the people who support themselves by working on the land are well-to do families, and among these only 12 per cent have between 10 to 20 hectares.[3]

3. Peasants

a) Subsistance Farmers: Own their land and produce only use

value. Perhaps less than 30 per cent of the people who lived off the land in Iran can be put into this category.

b) Sharecroppers: These occupy but usually do not own the land upon which they work; they produce rent which is given to the landowner and which may become an exchange value in his hand. These two categories of peasants are not mutually exclusive. A subsistance farmer may also be a sharecropper and vice versa. And both may also be part-time labourers.

c) Landless Labourers: These neither own nor occupy land, but work for a wage in cash or in kind. These labourers cannot be considered proletarians even though they may be wage labourers, since they are not "free" labourers and they are still bound by feudal obligations which make their condition akin to that of a serf. [4]

With some exceptions, mainly in the fertile Caspian littoral 90 per cent of the Iranian peasants were sharecroppers in the 1950's.

There were variations as to the size of shares according to locality. Usually the produce at harvest time was divided roughly into fifths. The first fifth went to the owner of the land. The second fifth went to the person who provides the seed, and he was often the landlord. The third fifth went to the supplier of water, who was also the landlord. The forth fifth went to the person who provided the oxen, who in 75 per cent of the cases was either the landlord of the local gavdar - either a ballif or a rich farmer. The last fifth belonged to the peasant himself for his labor; from it he had to pay his taxes and support his family.

The following classification of rural stratification in Iranian villages, done by Nikki R. Keddie, will give us a general

view of village stratas.

Strata of Adult Male Agriculturalists Widely Found In Iranian Villages, In Generally Declining Economic and Prestige Order:

I. NON-CULTIVATORS

1. Absentee landlords including the state, crown and vaqf (land owned by religious institutions) trustees.
2. Large-scale renters from above, often absentee.
3. Village officials: headman, landlords' agents, water officials, field watchers, etc.
4. Non-cultivating small-owners.
5. Non-cultivating small-renters from strata 1 or 2 (one village or less).
6. Non-cultivating leasers of productive instruments, usually cattle, sometimes water.
7. Non-cultivating heads of work team, providing at least one instrument of production.

II. CULTIVATORS

8. Cultivating small owners.
9. Cultivators paying a fixed cash rental.
10. Cultivating heads of work team.
11. Sharecroppers with some productive instruments, usually oxen, not head of a work team.
12. Sharecroppers with only labor to sell, but with a regular position on a work team or on a land.
13. Labourers with regular wage, in cash or in kind.

14. Casual labourers, without a place on work team or land, often hired by the day only at peak seasons.

Source: Nikki R. Keddie: "The Iranian Village Before and After Land Reform"; Journal of the Contemporary History, Vol. 3., 1968. pp. 74-75.

c) Mode of Production

In almost all villages in Iran, a feudal way of production was dominant.

Although a survey undertaken in 1960 by the Iranian authorities and the FAO reveals 14.4 per cent of the employed rural population were wage labourers, I doubt the accuracy of this figure. [5] According to other sources and my own experience cash payment for labour hardly existed. Instead, labour was paid in kind. And if ever labour was paid in cash, the figure would be insignificant. [6]

In 1960, 75 per cent of all lands made use of animal power. Mechanized power was used on only 4 per cent of the landholdings. [7] Predominantly manual techniques of production was the major characteristic of agriculture in Iranian villages.

d) Land Under Cultivation

Of the total 164 million hectares of Iran, only 18 million hectares are arable. One-third of the arable area of Iran is annually cultivated, that is some 6.2 million hectares. Every year, an area of 11.8 million hectares of arable land lies fallow.

A survey which was done by a three-man team under the Ford Foundation in 1954, showed an extremely low level of living, poor

resources, lack of landlord investment, and low yields in agriculture.[8]

As the following table shows, the level of agricultural production was very low and decreasing.

Table IV

INDEXES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (AP)

AND PER CAPITA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (PCAP)

FOR IRAN (1952-1954=100)

	AP	PCAP
1935-1939	85	118
1957-1958	117	106
1958-1959	119	108
1959-1960	123	106
1960-1961	118	96

Source: Farhad Khamsi, op. cit.

2. First Stage of Land Reform

On January 9, 1962/19 Day, 1340 the land reform law of 1960 was amended, and became known as the first stage of land reform.

1. It limited holdings to one village. Those who had more than one village could choose one village or parts from different villages that totalled one village.

Commentary

a) The size of the village varies widely in different parts of Iran. For example, in the south-east and east of Iran, the village is generally small. Often it consists of one or two families. On the other hand, in Isfahan they tend to be larger and often consist of several hundred families. In Azarbaijan, many of the villages have the population of several thousands. Besides, there are many instances

of registering a group of villages as one village (e.g. Ghavan in Fars).

b) having freedom of choice the landlords retained the most fertile areas.

c) the concept of landowner was not well defined. A landowner could be anybody at any age. Therefore many landowners very easily transfered their lands to their relatives by ante-dating the transfer of their estates.[9] There was considerable sabotage of the land reform by the large landowners with the connivance of officials, both in the local and reform office and other departments. Besides, the transfer of the land under the law of 9 January, 1962, was not to begin throughout the country at once and this, contrary to Lambton who thought "this was a wise decision" gave landowners enough time for their sabotage.[10]

2. The 1960 land reform law fixed the compensation to be given to the landowners on the basis of the taxation they paid prior to 9 January, 1962. The price of the land was to be fixed by the Department of Agriculture in each area.

Commentary

a) Point three of the six-point program is to help to compensate the landowners for the loss of their lands. The price of the land was to be exchangeable for an investment in agricultural, industrial, or mining products, and could also be used in government factories and to repay loans from the government.

b) Further, if officials knew the landowners or were afraid of their power and influence, higher prices for the land were fixed.

3. The 1960 law made membership in a cooperative society a condition for the receipt of land.[11]

4. Article 20 of the 1960 law laid down the duty of the landowner to clean the qanat (underground water conduits which bring water for scores of miles from mountains to the plains); and the duty to provide seeds and fertilizers. The law also set forth the joint responsibility of peasant and landowner for taking care of the qanat.

Commentary

a) The important point is that the exploitation of water which depends on some form of power, was not subject to purchase by the government nor transferred to peasants in the same way as land. This brought about serious problems.

b) It was foolish for drafters of the 1960 land reform law to suppose that the landowners would carry out their duties with regard to irrigation, as laid down by Article 20. Many landowners even before land reform had not done this; and those who formerly did, stopped doing it. For example, in Isfahan no work has been done by the landowners on qanats since land reform. Other examples are Mubarekeh in Iranshahr, Raziankari in Mamassani where the qanat dried up in 1965.[12] Thus irrigation received a set back, and investment in qanat by landowners declined after land reform.

The following categories were excluded from the provisions of the law of 9 January 1962, temporarily or permanently:

1) Orchards, tea plantations, and woodland, if the arseh (the land on which they grow), the ayan (the trees, buildings, etc.) and the water for their irrigation belonged to the landowner.

Commentary

a) Due to the exclusion of orchards from the provisions of the law, there are many instances where landowners transfered their fertile lands to orchards.

2. Also excluded was all land worked by mechanized means on the date of the passing of the law, the labour for which was paid in wages (cash or kind), as long as it was so worked.

Commentary

a) by exempting lands worked by mechanized means, and by not defining what is meant by mechanized means, the fertile land was declared to be mechanized by means of tractors (Lambton: 262). There were frequent complaints in Kermanshah, Kerman, Isfahan, and elsewhere, that the best land of the village was declared "mechanized" - cultivated by means of tractors.

3. Land which had been held on leasehold tenure on 5 December, 1959 was not subject to sale to the government until the lease expired - provided that not more than five years remained.

a) The Scope of The First Stage of Land Reform

In the following paragraphs I will talk about the general affects of the first stage, and at the end of this chapter I will give a detailed discussion of the effects of land reform.

The proportion of villages directly affected by the first stage was very small, around 1/6 of all the villages in Iran. In the first stage, 8,042 villages were affected and turned over to 271,026 peasants (1/55 of the rural population).

Thirty per cent of the few people who benefited from land

reform got almost two hectares of land and the rest did not get anything.

The above figure shows that the scope of the first stage of land reform was very narrow, and that some of the landowners succeeded in findig a way to be exempted from land reform law.

Furthermore, the land which was sold to the government by landlords was to be sold to the peasants at the price for which it had been bought plus a maximum of 10 percent, to be paid in 15 equal installments. Besides, the distribution of land wasn't accompanied by distribution of water rights. Irrigation, as I mentioned before, is very important for cultivation in Iran. Land distribution which is merely a superficial real estate deal, does not have any much meaning to the mass of impoverished peasants.

Installments that the peasants had to pay for purchased land was higher than what they paid before reform to landowners as rent. True, they now had the oppurnity of getting loans from a co-operative. For getting loans they had to buy shares in the co-operative, and the loan they could get was five times the amount of their share. They have to use some of the loan to buy at least one new share.

The amount of the loan was very small, and usually was spent on consumption goods. As a result of paying their installments they were chronically in need of money. Previously, they could borrow from landlords. But now there was no such chance; they borrow from rich peasants and middlemen.

The reform did not affect all the rural population equally. For example, those who cultivated land in the village retained by the landowner as his chosen village; or those whose land was owned by small landowners subject to transfer by the first stage of land

reform continued to cultivate the land on the old sharecropping basis.

Only one class of peasants, the affluent one, was able to obtain land. The peasant who provided farming elements, such as seed and oxen, were to be given priority over those who only provided labor. As Hossein Mahdavy puts it, "two-thirds of the rural population belong to those classes that either have no land or have less than four hectares. This basic porblem was left untouched."[13]

Nikki Keddie, on the basis of government data, which is obviously unreliable, finds that 14-16 per cent of Iran's villages and villagers were affected by the first phase, and 40-50 per cent of these got no land. In effect, Keddie estimates about 8 per cent of Iran's peasants got land in the first phase.[14]

In this stage small concessions were made to certain peasants without really reducing the power of the large landowners.

The first stage of land reform was mostly an intensive propaganda campaign. The purpose was to conciliate an angry mass of peasantry. The solution was mild. It prepared the way for capitalist farming without totally abolishing feudalism.

3. Second Stage of Land Reform

On 17 January, 1963, five Additional Articles of the land reform law of 9 January, 1962 were issued. Regulations for Additional Articles were eventually issued on 25 July, 1964, but implementation did not begin until February, 1965. This was known as the second stage of land reform.

The second stage laid down the procedure to be adopted in those villages which were not subject to purchases by government

under the first stage.

The landowner had the five following choices to make:

1) To rent the land to the occupying peasants for a cash rent based on the average annual income of the preceding three years, excluding dues, for thirty years, renewable every five years. The way rent was fixed was not favorable to the peasants.[15] Landowners in many instances fixed a rent higher than their former share. Under this article, 1, 232, 548 persons rented land from the landowner.

2) To sell the land to occupying peasants. 57,226 such persons bought their lands from landowners. These were usually the lands the landowner wanted to get rid of.

3) To divide the irrigated and unirrigated land between two parties, landowner and peasant, in the same proportion as the crop was shared under the prevailing crop-sharing agreement. Two-fifths of the price of land was to be paid by the peasant in ten years. The amount of land he received was often insufficient for his living; some of them received less than ½ hectare, and had to find other jobs, or work as a tenant on the landowner's land.[16]

Another serious problem of this type of settlement were the cases where landowners, in order to cultivate their retained land more intensively, sank a deep well and dried up the ganat which watered the peasant's lands (e.g. many villages in Fars province). A survey which was done by a guerilla organization in 80 villages in Iran does not show any example where the peasants were satisfied by the way land was distributed in this settlement.

Under this regulation 156,580 peasants were affected.

4) To form a shareholding unit with the peasants, and divide

the crop according to the share of each. This settlement is the same as the old sharecropping system, but with a new name. Six hundred villages formed shareholding units, which means that 110,126 peasants formed a unit with their landowners.

5) To purchase the peasants right. This is the most controversial settlement which encouraged the landowners to try to force the peasants on their land to sell their rights, usually the best land. In some districts, sales by peasants were fairly widespread (e.g. Turbat-i-Haydari).[17] And in some villages landlords had peasants sign a paper which they later found was the sale of their right. There are many cases of this sort where landlords took advantage of peasants' ignorance. Up to December, 1970, it was reported by the government, 17,157 peasants sold their rights. But in another report it was announced that 7,869 landowners bought these rights. Let us suppose, that on the average, thirty peasants sold their rights in each village. Then the real figure would be more than 200,000.[18]

At the second stage it was also decided that orchards in which water and land (arseh) was owned by the landlord; and the trees, building, etc. (ayan) owned by the peasant - should be divided between them or be bought by one of the two parties.

But this was never executed. The government passed a law on April, 1972, that if landowners and peasants do not come to an agreement by December, 1972, the government will take action. It was decided that, for orchards where the arseh is owned by the landowner and its ayan by the peasant, three-fourths of the orchard with water rights should be given to the peasant. For orchards owned totally by the landowner with its ayan jointly owned, half of the orchard

with attendant water rights should be transfered to the peasant.

It should be mentioned that the number of these kinds of orchards was very small at the beginning of the land reform. After land reform started, such orchard settlements were almost abolished by various types of sabotage used by landowners during that period. Further, for the small number left, the settlement was not to the benefit of the peasant.

In the regulations for the Additional Articles as originally drafted, the amount of land a landowner might hold was defined in terms of hectares, and it varied in different parts of the country. Landowners were allowed to hold more than one village. And on 25 August, 1963, the land reform council decided that children under the care of the head of the family could also hold up to the maximum permitted by the first stage. On the 7 February, 1964, a similar decision was made for wives.

The Annexe also extended exemption from land reform distribution, up to 500 hectares for mechanized farm land and up to 30 hectares for paddy-fields. In the first stage of land reform, land which was mechanized since the issue of the first stage law was exempted. But in the second stage the land was exempted from the provisions of the law, if mechanization had been applied since the issuing of the first stage law of land reform. This was an opportunity for landowners to mechanize their land and thereby to escape the land reform law.

On the whole, the same categories of land excluded from the provisions of the first stage law were also excluded from the second stage.

One exception was land held as vaqf-e-am, that is as religious charitable estates. Article 11 allowed such land to be leased for ninety-nine years to the peasants of those lands, renewable every five years. Under this Article 135,751 peasants were affected, and all were complaining about the high rents of these lands. [19]

At this second stage, the peasant to whom the land might be transfered was more narrowly defined. There was some doubt over the status of peasants. The peasants who had not received land under first stage of reform assumed their turn would come under second stage. But under the second stage, the peasants not only did not receive land as their fellows had under the first stage, but they confronted some intensive new problems. Hence there was a change in their attitude, and a tendency to regard government as Lambton puts it, as "enemy" rather than "friend". [20]

Lambton is very conservative and does her best to justify the beneficial effects of land reform law in Iran. But for evident reasons, she fails. One comes across many examples from her book which can be used as proof:

> "In many cases I had the impression in 1964 that government offices if not actually hostile to land reform, were giving it little support, ...The local department of justice was sometimes regarded with suspicion...The Gendarmerie, whose cooperation was crucial, were sometimes distrusted by the peasants, who felt that they could not get justice." [21]

In 1966, 60 per cent of land reform officials' time in Kermanshah was preoccupied with investigations of disputes. This is generally true for other areas. There was little accurate land-tenure data, so the officials relied on figures and information given by the village head which for obvious reasons were not accurate,

and which were slanted in favour of landowners.

The combined result of first and second stage of land reform up to January, 1967, may be summarized as follows:

Table V

COMBINED RESULTS OF FIRST AND SECOND STAGE OF LAND REFORM UP TO JANUARY, 1967 IN IRAN

Peasants who became owners	786,715
Peasants who became leaseholders	1,223,968
Peasants who became shareholders	153,111
sub-total	2,163,794
Peasants who sold their customary rights	14,187
Total [22]	2,177,981

Land owners directly engaged in farming	725,535
Mechanized villages exempted from the reform	1,277
Orchards exempted from the reform	2,650

Source: Farhad Khamsi, Op. cit.

a) The Scope of the Second Stage of Land Reform

The second stage of land reform, covering most of that large majority of village untouched by the first phase, was of a much more conservative nature than the first stage of land reform. The "revolutionary" promises of the first stage did not exist in the second stage. It was counterrevolutionary and completely in favor of the landlords and the rural bourgeoisie.

At the end of the second stage, 60 percent of the Iranian villages will still be in the hands of small landowners. This does not make any basic change for the peasant, whether his landlord has

one village or two thousand villages. The fact is that the peasant still has to pay rent and be dependent on a landowner as before.

Of the five courses of action open to landlords in the second stage, as Table IV shows, the majority chose to lease their villages rather than to sell or distribute the land. Among those who became owners of the land only 300,000 families got enough land to be able to support themselves. [23]

The above paragraph represents more a regularization of the existing situation than any profound reform. Particularly where leases revisable every five years are chosen, the landlord loses nothing and gains a government-enforced lease.

Official figures show that 199,000 ex-tenants got some land in this stage, and three quarters of these got less land than they formerly farmed. The rest, which was more than two million peasants (with families totaling 11.4 million people) received no land, although it is said officially they have benefited from this phase of land reform.

In the second stage, 60-70 percent of the villages were affected. Among these less than 10 per cent got any land. If we could rely on official figures, it can be said that 6-7 per cent of the total population received land in this stage. [24]

It can be summarized in a few sentences that the sharp reversal of the government policy in this stage was in favor of landowners. Those holding the reins of power began to realize that the emergence of an independent peasantry might constitute a new factor in the political situation and might threaten their own power. This induced further caution, as is reflected in the regulation for

this stage of land reform.

On one hand the first, fourth and fifth choices of the landowners in this stage continued feudal relations; and on the other hand, it encouraged mechanization and a capitalist way of production for a priviledged minority.

4. Third Stage of Land Reform

The third stage was implemented in December, 1969. The purpose of this stage was to abolish tenancies and shareholding units. Landowners could choose one of the following ways:

1) They could sell their land with water to peasants through government. The price of land was ten times the yearly lease for those who wanted to be paid in cash; and twelve times the yearly lease for twelve one-year installments.

The charitable vaqf was excluded. [25]

2) Landlords could divide their land in the same proportion as the crop was shared under the prevailing crop-sharing agreement. Two-fifths of the price of the land was to be paid by the peasants in ten years. (Private vaqf went under this regulation).

Landowners who owned shareholding units were to choose one of the following modes of settlement:

1) They could sell the land to peasants (as mentioned before).

2) They could divide their land in the same proportion as the crop was shared under the prevailing crop-sharing agreement. Two-fifths of the price of the land was to be paid by the peasant over ten years.

On the whole, there are very few villages where the third stage of land reform has been executed.

In February, 1970, the government announced that the three stages of land reform were finished. There will be no new law as far as land reform is concerned, and landowners do not have to worry at all. [26]

5. Rural Co-operatives

As we have seen, Iranian landowners' role in the village was weakened. As a result of this he was no longer interested in investing in the villages, or in lending money to peasants. The key solution proposed by the Iranian government for this problem was rural co-operatives. These were supposed to take the place of landowners.

The legal basis for these societies is the co-operative societies law of 1955.

Membership in a co-operative society is a condition for the receipt of land by the peasant.

The co-operative was supposed to have a very wide scope of action, such as:

-provision of agricultural machinery and fertilizers;

-giving loans and credits and provision of primary necessities.

But they have remained mostly credit co-operatives, and have played a large part in introducing modern consumption patterns to the villages.

These rural co-operatives gave short-term loans, usually for ten months. Their loans were very small, and were not supervised. [27] Peasants used loans generally for consumption goods such as: clothes,

transistor radios, and gadgets.

The peasants pay 6 per cent interest on the loan they receive, plus 2 per cent for the building of the co-operative. Also, they had to pay 5 per cent of the amount of the loan they receive, for a new share.

Members can receive loans up to five times the value of their investment (shares). In this way, they would be able to receive more loans each year and become more dependent on co-operatives

The main beneficiaries here were the well-to-do peasants, since they were able to purchase a greater number of shares. Loans must be repaid before new loans are given, and also it must be paid on time.

The situation was complicated by the fact that the peasants were often unable to pay their installments, and therefore had to borrow money, not from landowners this time but from money lenders at a high rate of interest. [28] In 1967 in Gazvin, about 240 peasants were arrested or jailed for not being able to pay their installments.

In theory, a co-operative society was to have been set up wherever land was transfered to the peasants, But the establishment of co-operatives lagged far behind the redistribution and settlement of land. By September, 1963, there were only 927 co-operatives in some 2 per cent of Iranian villages, [29] and by September, 1965, they totalled 2,251. [30] By the spring, 1967, there were 7,600 co-operatives and it mounted to 8,652 by the spring of 1968. [31]

Only a small proportion of these co-operatives had begun to function. The rest existed in name only. And in villages where very few peasants received land they were made members of a co-operative society situated too far away from the village for membership

to be effective. Further, there was a growing coolness towards co-operative societies, accompanied by an increased metropolitan interest in the development of private investment in agriculture. There was a sudden change in the type of credit given by Agricultural Bank, in 1965-67, [32] For example, seasonal loan expenditures which concerned peasants, almost halved, while large loans, which concerned landowners, were quadrupled. [33]

Another dilemma was the conflict between different governmental institutions and the co-operative societies. The latter did not become the sole agency for the conduct of village financial affairs: an increasing number of other agencies were set up and still are.

The village council under the Ministry of Interior is concerned with the administration of village affairs. And a local tribunal (Khane-ye-Ensaf) settles small disputes. The rivalry between the central organization for rural co-operation and the Agricultural Bank appears to be developing, and the various bodies cut across one another's activities.

Moreover, co-operative managers were too few and too inexperienced. In 1967, 7,600 co-operatives were registered but there was only 1,200 managers to direct the co-operatives. Many of these were persons who had been in charge of village affairs before the land reform. A considerable number of them in different areas were removed and charged with corruption. [34]

The vital co-operative network has existed largely on paper. In 1970, an alternative system of Agricultural Corporations was in operation on an experimental basis.

Up to 1973 twenty-seven Agricultural Corporations have been set up. They are to be run under central government control. The land that was transfered to the peasant is now to be taken away; in return he will be given a share in an Agricultural Corporation. The peasant will be employed as an agricultural labourer and the profit of the corporation will be divided, at the end of each year, according to the amount of each person's share. The corporation was set up to rectify the low level of production after first and second stage of land reform.

The establishment of Agricultural Corporation is an attempt to "capitalize" agriculture so as to attain economies of scale. Under the regulations of this corporation the peasant is reduced to a proletarian.

Up to now, farmers and small landowners are not satisfied with this settlement. They say that the profit from the shares is much less than their former income.

6. The Scope of Three Stages Of Land Reform in the Iranian Countryside

a) Changes in Class Relations

The distribution of land on the basis of the size of customary holdings has left the class division in rural areas almost unchanged. Only part of the strata of absentee landlord and large-scale renters were eliminated in the process of land reform.

By giving priority in receiving land to those who own some instrument of production, non-cultivating classes (such as small renters, leasers of productive instruments and non-cultivating heads of

work teams) got land; while sharecroppers, labourers and casual labourers who constitute 40 to 50 per cent of the villages and who are in the lower strata did not receive any land. On the whole perhaps 14-15 per cent of all Iranian peasants got some land.[35] But, most of them did not get enough land to be able to support themselves.

Thus the land was allocated to the wealthier village residents. A small but new class of kulaks have obtained land through the recent agrarian reform.

The peasants hoped to become landed farmers when the reform was first announced. Instead they found themselves being forced to make a living as landless laborers. As a result, a large class of landless and near-landless peasants who live mainly by working as agricultural laborers was produced.

As was shown, land reform law enabled the government to buy surplus land from the old landlords and sell land titles to the richer peasants who traditionally had the right to farm the land and act as village headman. The reform did little or nothing for the poorer peasants, who had no such right and could not buy. In fact, it worsened their position by abolishing the traditional claims they had on the landlords.

Furthermore, unforseen divisions occured within the peasant calss. For example certain peasants benefited while others suffered from the changes. The priviledged peasants gained domination over poor peasants by lending money, by buying their labor power, and so on.

The shift from big landlordism to small landlordism has had one major effect: it has extended the power and influence of government

in rural areas. The peasants are ruled indirectly by government officials, who were mostly the rich peasants, and they are as powerless vis-a-vis the government officials as they were to former landlords.

b) Political Effects

The early threat of a new, educated middle class had produced an attempt to distribute the crown lands in the early 1950's. By 1963, however, the threat had magnified to such an extent that the Shah and the political elite sought a way out.

Massive poverty, general dissatisfaction with prevailing conditions, and the sluggish growth of agricultural production all made unrest in rural areas an imminent danger.

The land reform programs had two objectives: to modernize Iranian agriculture, and to remove the danger of a peasant uprising. Here it enjoyed the full backing of the United States which regarded land reform in developing nations not only as a way to forestall revolution, but as one which would lead to the expansion of the investment horizon for American capitalist enterprises.

Land reform has weakened and alienated a considerable sector of the Shah's traditional allies, the landlords. The regime has also lost the confidence of industrialists, mainly through an overpublicized profit-sharing "reform" measure which has remained almost a deal letter. And, the religious leaders were also forced into active opposition when they were confronted with brutal suppression.

The Shah was ready to take the risk of alienating the absentee landlords in order to do what was necessary to put Iran's position on a sounder basis. Particularly, he hoped to replace the landlords' support with that of peasant elements.

Politically, the reform was a great success for the regime. In one blow the Shah managed to destroy the semi-feudal system in the countryside, and the independent power base of the landlords, while compensating the landlords (i.e. by paying money to landlords in return to their land, and encouraging them to invest in enterprises, the former landlords became big bourgeois) well enough to maintain their loyalty. He also managed to divide the peasantry so that they could not organize against him.

The future politicalization of the peasantry seems likely to put an end to the traditional status of this class, for involvement in economic and political disturbances appears inevitable. Their opposition to the regime is already intensifying as they flood into the urban slums in search of work, and as a modern means of communication transform them from scattered villagers into a national force conscious, for the first time, on their own class destiny.

As a result, the peasants have become increasingly conscious of themselves as a class. They have faced the corrupt governmental apparatus by themselves, and found there is a close connection between rich landowners and government. They have found that the government's revolutionary language was in large part a mere fraud. As a result, the meaning of landownership is shaken in their mind. They are learning that they are in contradiction with government.

c) Economic Effects

In addition to urgent political reasons for land reform another reason for its adoption was to modernize agriculture.

Thus the feudal system is to be abolished by distributing the land; at the same time the former large landowners are given the

oppurtunity of ensuring their priviledged social and financial status by purchasing shares in enterprises that had been state-owned up to that time. The former feudal landowners, uninterested in productive agriculture, satisfactorily exchange their unprofitable land with industrial stock which is promising. In this way, the state makes sure that industry will be in conservative hands.[36]

Land reform has shaken the backbone of Iranian feudalism yet it has retained of feudalism's most backward features. It is clear that the trend is toward capitalism and increased investment and productivity in agriculture. State policy has encouraged the development of free wage labor and the capitalist way of production, although one must keep in mind that sharecropping still exists in practice. For example, in some of the villages in Kerman sharecropping still exists. But in order to comply with the regulation peasants are forced by landowners to sign a paper stating that they have been paid in cash.[37]

As Khamsi puts it: By generally transforming holdings into leaseholds and owner-operated farms, by placing tenure for an indefinite period with tenure based on contractual agreement, the reform has, nevertheless, created a new set of conditions. This, as well as the transfer of funds - in the form of compensation payments - from the peasants to the landowners, the allocation of the major portion of agricultural credit to large holders and companies, the pressure for mechanization, the more favorable position which well-to-do peasants occupy in rural co-operatives, and government encouragement of domestic and foreign capital to enter the sphere of agriculture will undoubtedly accelerate the growth of capitalist farming. With regard to the last,

it may be mentioned that already American, British, Canadian, German, and Japanese financial and industrial concerns are vying to invest in agricultural projects." [38] The present trend is towards a gradual increase of the numbers of commercial farms, and towards a quick differentiation among peasantry. But it is not yet clear when and whether this trend towards capitalism will come to dominate completely the traditional patterns of Iranian agriculture.

Land reform has produced in Iran an army of labourers and proletarians. This poor class of peasantry who face the problem of sheer subsistance move off the land and emigrate to cities.

The co-operatives proposed by the government to compensate for the inefficiency of the small farmers have not worked. Few of them ever existed except on paper because the government wouldn't allow the farmers to organize and press for the basic credit facilities they needed in order to modernize.

More recently, the government has set up a system of agricultural corporations, wherein the farmer exchanges the title to his land for shares in a commercial farm run by a government official. The corporation has turned out to be less efficient than the co-operatives.

The administration of the reform program was complicated and based on traditional power relationships. On the one hand, the Ministeries of Agriculture, Interior, and Finance were competing for control over the program. On the other hand, a new land reform department was established. Furthermore, the existence of co-operative organizations, credit banks, the provincial bureaucracy, and gendarmerie, with all the conflict which existed among them, made the picture even

more complicated. The reform program clearly indicated its aim for preservation of many traditional relationships.

d) Social Effects

There is still a tremendous difference between rural and urban areas so far as health, education, housing and so on are concerned.

The majority of the rural population are still living in semi-starvation and sheer poverty. Land reform was not accompanied by health, welfare, education, and other social services.

One of the aims of the White Revolution was an illiteracy campaign, and a health campaign. I am not going to go into detail about these two programs. But it is necessary to say that like the land reform program, both were used as propaganda tools.

Although education is necessary and compulsory, it yet remains to be implemented throughout the country. In only a few villages, except in those near the towns, there are schools. For example, Khaneh Khatoon village in Bam with 81 households and Malangan village in Jiroft with 100 households, have no school.[39] And a long list of these villages in similar situations can be made.

There is a shortage of teachers, buildings and so on. It is difficult for women teachers to go to villages. On the whole, the teachers who go to rural areas are the most desparate ones. For those who do not have any connections, economical need is the only motive that takes them there. They are always trying to be transfered to the capital city or to other big cities, where they will have better living facilities.

The poverty of the villages is an obstacle to education.

Children from the earliest age have to help their families. They start working when they are four and five years old. For example, in Kamal Abad village in Sirjan with 76 households, there are only 35 students in school. [40]

In many cases school buildings are dark and cramped. Moreover, the curriculum and textbooks are not suited to the needs of rural children.

Rural students come across names in their textbooks which they have not seen or heard before, that is, such words as - table, chair post office, taxi, etc.

The state education program which says schools should be started in September and finished in May, does not fit the village program. The beginning and the end of school year is the busiest time for all villagers; that is why the student even forgets the date of exams. The following quote clarifies the situation:

> "I was teaching in a school which had six grades. In the beginning of the year we had 146 students. In the winter time the number of students started to decrease. Every day one or two quit school. In May only 90 students were present for exams. Do you know where the rest of the students were? They were working in the carpet industry to help toward their families' living expenses. The parents did not do that eagerly, the bad economic situation made him to put his child to work. It is not unusual in rural areas to give their children away as servants in return for 3 or 4 dollars a year." [41]

The census of 1966 for the agricultural sector shows that 85 per cent of all agricultural workers are illiterate, with less than one percent ever having received more than elementary education. [42]

Table VI

PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERATE IN IRAN IN 1966

Age-groups	Total	Male	Female
15+	77.0	66.9	87.6
10-14	47.1	32.7	63.2
15-19	57.8	43.9	71.9
20-24	67.8	52.2	81.3
25-34	78.3	67.4	89.1
35-44	81.2	73.0	91.4
45-54	84.9	76.6	94.4
55-64	89.1	81.6	97.0
65+	91.7	85.8	98.2

Source: Statistical Yearbook, UNESCO, 1973.

Although the above table shows improvement of literacy in the whole population, but the problem remains as severe as before if we could do the class analysis of this table. In that case we will come to this point that still a lot of rural population remain illiterate, and there is a lot of difference between rural/urban and rich/poor people.

The health condition of the rural population is poor. Malnutrition and semi-starvation are common. For example in Deh Mirza in Bam the best dish of the people which they will eat only three or two times a week consists of water, margarine and onion.[43] Again I should add this village is not an exception. There are no washrooms or bathrooms in many villages. People use river water on warm days for washing.

By 1966, less than 4 per cent of rural households possessed electricity and less than one per cent had piped water. The estimated life expectancy at birth is about 38 years of age.[44]

In short, the living condition of the majority of the rural population not only was not ameliorated by land reform as the propaganda has claimed; it was worsened. It increased dissatisfaction

among the peasantry, and in many cases forced them to go to city slums and search for a new way to be able to support their living.

Footnotes

[1] Orgaization of Iranian Popular Front (O.I.P.F.) About Land Reform And its Direct Effect, Iranian National Front Organization outside the country, Middle East Section, 1973. (in Persian).

[2] Those who have one or more villages.

[3] Farhad Khamsi: "Land Reform in Iran", Monthly Review, vol. 21, no. 2, June 1969, p. 22.

[4] Common to all three categories of peasants is the existence of feudal obligations. The rural proletariat only comes into existence after the peasantry have been freed of these feudal ties.

[5] Nikki R. Keddie: "The Iranian Village Before and After Land Reform", Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 3, 1968, p. 79.

[6] As I have observed, during the 1960's in the villages in the littorial of the Caspian Sea, labour was paid in kind not in cash. There existed a paternal relationships between the labourer and the landlord exemplified by the labourer taking meals in the landlord's house and receiving second hand clothing and other small favours.

[7] O.I.P.F.G., Op. Cit., p. 31-32.

[8] Nikki R. Keddie: Op. Cit., p. 71.

[9] By Additional Articles on August, 1963, and further modification on February, 1964, children under the care of the head of the family and wives could hold up to the maximum permitted by the law of 9, January, 1962.

[10] Ann K.S. Lambton, The Persian Land Reform 1962-66, Clarendon Press Oxford, 1969, p. 9.

[11] I will talk about co-operatives later.

[12] Ann K.S. Lambton, Op. Cit., p. 284-87.

[13] Hossein Mahdavy, "The Coming Crisis in Iran", Foreign Affairs, vol. 44, October 1965.

[14] Nikki R. Keddie, Op. Cit., p. 87

[15] Ann K.S. Lambton, "Land Reform and the Rural Co-Operative Societies," Iran Faces The Seventies, ed. Pragner Publishers, Inc., 1971, p. 25.

[16] O.I.P.F.G., Op. Cit., p. 58.

[17] Ann K.S. Lambton, Iran Faces The Seventies, p. 263.

Footnotes

[20] Ann K.S. Lambton, Op. Cit., p. 218.

[21] Ann K.S. Lambton, Ibid, p. 124.

[22] About ten million out of 15.4 million rural population of Iran belongs to the classes who have either no land or they have less than 4 hectares, Nikki Keddie, Iranian Villages Before and After Land Reform, p. 79.

[23] Hossein Mahdavy, Op. Cit., and also see footnote #32.

[24] Nikki R. Keddie, Op. Cit., p. 87.

[25] Under the law for selling charitable vaqf, April, 1971, 135,751 persons should have bought the land under lease, but as government data shows only 47,063 persons bought the land up to December, 1971.

[26] Up to January, 1972, 16,333 villages and 1001 farms are affected by the first stage law of land reform. This figure makes it clear how effective the other stages could be, and how accurate the Shah is when he says: "Today, in Iran 54,000 villages, there is not a single farmer who does not own his land. After centuries of exploitation, the Iranian farmer is at last the master of his own fate." (Land Reform in Iran, Iran, Ministry of Information, p. 9)

[27] Bahman Nirumand, Op. Cit., p. 131-34 in 1964.

[28] James Allan Bill, Op. Cit., p. 148

[29] Hossein Mahdavy, Op. Cit., p. 141.

[30] Bahman Nirumand, Op. Cit., p. 131.

[31] Ann K.S. Lambton, "Land Reform and the Rural Co-Operative Societies", Iran Faces Seventies, (ed.) Praeger Publishers, Inc. 1971.

[32] Co-operative funds came from this bank.

[33] Farhad Khamsi, Op. Cit., p. 25.

[34] James Allan Bill, Op. Cit., p. 148.

[35] Nikki R. Keddie, Op. Cit., p. 87.

[36] Today former feudals (e.g. Farmanfarma, Batmanghelij, Alam, and on the top of them royal families are powerful bourgeoisies.

Footnotes

37 O.I.P.F.G., Survey on Economic Aspects of Villages in Kerman, 1974, p. 6 (in Persian).

38 Farhad Khamsi, Op. Cit., p. 27.

39 Guerrillas Devoted to the People, Survey on Economic...., Op. Cit., p. 80.

40 O.I.P.F.G., Ibid, p. 8.

41 Samad Behrangi, Analysis of Educational Problem of Iran, (in Persian)

42 Anybody who can read and write the Persian alphabet is considered literate. Therefore the concept is very limited, and the data does not represent the true situation.

43 O.I.P.F.G., Survey on Economic..., Op. Cit., p. 43.

44 Iran Report, No. 1, September 1973.

Chapter IV

CUBA

Political Background

In early modern times, Cuba's strategic location as well as it's size (the largest island in the Caribbean) made it a desirable possession for Spain, which was seeking supremacy and rules in the world.

As time went by, the Spanish Crown became more interested in the possibility of finding gold in Cuba. Exploration soon gave way to conquest and colonization.

Spain conquered the island in 1511 and subjugated the Indians. Indian agricultural practices were taken over by the Spaniards. New crops and new grains were brought into the island. Sugar, which had been grown by the Spaniards in the Canary Islands, also became part of the island's economy.

The economy was oriented toward importing the bare necessities. The island was a producer of raw materials for the mother country.

Cattle raising became one of the most prosperous businesses, especially in the 17th century. And it was also in 17th century that tobacco made modest gains. Tobacco commanded high prices in Europe, and was an export item.

As the demand for tobacco grew in Europe, Spain tightened its control, and all tobacco production was placed under a government monopoly early in 1717. Resistence and opposition grew to the point of

armed rebellion. It was not until a bloody, but successful revolt against Spanish imperialism, that Spain ended the monopoly.

During these times, tobacco growers found themselves either squeezed out of their lands or selling them to sugar capitalists. In desperate need of capital, Spain encouraged the sugar business as a source of revenue. The Crown's emphasis on coffee and sugar-growing also helped the deterioration of tobacco industry. But it was not until the 19th century that sugar assumed major importance under American domination.

During the first decades of the 16th century, Spanish settlement in Cuba and throughout the Caribbean were little challenged by European powers.

The increasing volume of trade coming from the New World increased the appetite of other European powers, in particular that of the English, who envied the growing wealth coming from the New World. This created a new challenge for Spain.

In August, 1762, England captured Havana, but only held it for eleven months, and during this time tried unsuccessfully to convert Cuba into a sugar factory. The impact of the occupation was long-range. It made Cubans aware of the benefit of trading with the English and particularly with a growing market like the United States. The rise of the slave-trade was another element which appeared after the capture.

At this point Cuba was exporting officially five times what it had sent out in the 1760's, and over thirty times as much as it had exported officially in the 1750's. Till the late 1820's Cuba became the richest colony and the largest sugar producer in the world. Cuba

was becoming dependent on the world market, not only with respect to sugar prices, but also with respect to both capital and labor.

In the 1840's, coffee, which had come to occupy an important position in the island's economy, was adversely affected by a fall in prices. This almost ruined the coffee planters. Capital and labor were shifted towards the growing of cane. Furthermore, the introduction of a railroad helped to bring cane from remote areas to the mills and then to the ports for shipment.

From 1815 on, an increasing tide of North American merchants reached Havana. By the 1850's the United States represented one-third of Cuba's entire foreign trade. Although Cuba was politically dependent on Spain, she was doing more trading with the United States and had become commercially more attached to the United States.

American capitalists began to make big investments in sugar plantations in the 1880's and the 1890's. By 1896, American mills owned 10 per cent of Cuba's production. American capitalists bought mining properties too, and by 1896 American investment in Cuba totalled $50 million.

The Spanish government was in no way disturbed by this development: bankrupt herself, unable to raise loans, she saw in it a means of raising customs revenues.

The early interest of the United States in Cuba was partly a result of its nearness to the United States shore and its strategic importance in the Caribbean. But in later years, the United States was interested in Cuba for new reasons. On the one hand, United States trade with Cuba developed and on the other hand the Panama Canal impelled the United States to desire a naval base in the region.

The interest of the United States Presidents in buying was expressed several times. In 1808, President Jefferson had expressed the United States' willingness to purchase Cuba. This was to be a recurrent theme for almost all American presidents up to 1901.

The Cubans meanwhile developed different ideas of their own destiny. Some desired separation from Spain, while others initiated annexation movements to join the United States. Further, there were some who turned to attempts to reform within the Spanish empire.

The goal of independence proved strongest. It was spurred on by the writings and activities of Jose Marti, a young Cuban revolutionary. In 1868 the Cuban people rose in armed rebellion to fight for their independence. The war lasted more than thirty years, and was followed by the intervention of the United States in 1898.

On April 19, 1898, the United States Congress passed a war resolution supporting Cuban independence from Spain.

Cuba was the cause of Spanish-American fighting, but in the moment of crisis the island was half forgotten. The Cubans themselves stood apart, almost neglected, yet historian P. Foner writes than the Cuban had practically won their war against Spain before American intervention. The Americans stepped in at the last minute to pick up the booty.

In less than four months after United States intervention, the war was over, with the United States the victor. On January 1, 1899, Spanish troops evacuated the island and the American military began the job of pacification, and after this, the United States wholly dominated Cuba.

On February 25, 1901, Senator Orvill H. Platt introduced in

Congress the famous Platt Amendment, bearing his name. The Platt Amendment defined Cuba's relations to the United States, and was passed into law by the United States Congress. On June 12, 1901, the Platt Amendment, with all of its restrictions on Cuban sovereignty, was added to the Cuban constitution. And on May 20, 1902, American military occupation of the island was ended; direct American economical and political control over Cuba was replaced by United States rule.

With American domination of Cuba, American capitalists were given a free hand to take hold of the economic life of the island. In the 1920's, with over 60 per cent of industry in American hands, and with the United States importing 95 per cent of the crop, Cuba was primarily controlled by United States businessmen, and particularly by United States bankers. Cuba became a one-commodity, export-oriented, sugar enclave. The sugar crop dominated the economy and powerfully influenced policy making.

By 1933, it was Washington rather than Havana which again, as in the 1890's, held the key to Cuba. Cuban presidents were chosen and replaced according to American interests. Corrupt politicians, supporters of foreign investors, ran the government, not in the interest of the people of Cuba, but for their own enrichment and for foreign interests.

As a result of the corruption of the government, the poverty of the people, the mass unemployment, and intensifying social and political problems in general, opposition developed from various sectors.

A small fraction within the Orthodoxes also advocated violence as the correct tactic to combat Batista, the dictator who was the

last president of Cuba before the revolution. Fidel Castro belonged to this group, a group that was destined to begin a movement that would change Cuban history.

Batista gained the presidency by a bloodless and masterfully executed coup d'etat on March 10, 1952, and a military Junta took power.

Several weeks after the coup d'etat, Fidel Castro showed in a brief that Batista and his accomplices violated the Social constitution. He requested their imprisonment, but Fidel's petition for the imprisonment of Batista was rejected by the court.

Fidel Castro came to the conclusion that the only way to overthrow Batista was to bring about a revolution. He organized and trained his own rebel army which consisted of 200 men and two women.

On 26 July, 1953, the rebel army attacked Moncada, the second largest of the country's military fortresses.

The attack turned into an uneven battle between a small rebel force armed with sporting rifles, and one thousand well organized soldiers. Although the attack was not a success, the attention of people had been won, and its political effects was tremendous.

Fidel Castro was sentenced to 15 years, and the few survivors of the rebel group to shorter terms.

A campaign for a general amnesty for all political prisoners was begun. Batista, in trouble and confronted with spreading popular discontent, needed to enhance his popularity, and smother the smoldering discontent. He listened to the advice given to him, and granted amnesty to Fidel and his comrades. They walked out of prison on May 15, 1955.

Fidel Castro did not give up his plans. Finding it impossible to act effectively under dictatorship regime, in July, 1955, he went to Mexico to gather arms and men for an invasion of Cuba. He came back with his group in November, 1956, and stayed in the Sierra Maestra mountains until January, 1959.

The rebel radio began broadcasting on February 24, 1958. The manifesto of the 26th of July Movement was issued to the people on March 12, 1958. The Manifesto called for revolutionary action, and prohibited the payment of any taxes beginning April 1, 1958. It announced the invasion of the northern and eastern parts of the province of Oriente and said that the country should consider itself in war against the tyranny.

On May 5, 1958, the rebel army launched the invasion. It was an uneven battle, 12000 Batista soldiers against 300 revolutionaries. But the rebel army was getting closer and closer to victory.

The United States was worried about the situation. On December 17, 1958, Ambassador Smith saw Batista and told him the State Department believed that he could no longer maintain effective control in Cuba, and wanted him to resign. The purpose was to bring into power a government which was satisfactory to the United States, and to prevent Fidel Castro from coming to power. But it was too late.

Before dawn on January 2, Fidel's army marched into Santiago, and accepted the unconditional surrender of Batista forces at Fort Moncada.

The new regime came into power on January 1, 1959. The power behind it was the rebel army with Fidel Castro as its supreme commander. On January 2, the rebel army called for a general strike to

mark the end of the old regime.

During the first few weeks in power, Castro assumed no official position except commander of the armed forces. His candidate for President was Manuel Urrutia, a judge who played an honorable role at the time of the attack on Moncada in 1953. Members of the new government had been active against Batista in one way or another.

Before the beginning of structural changes in the Cuban economy, relations with the new government, and relations between Cuba and the United States were friendly.

The real turning point started when the Agrarian Reform Law of May 17, 1959, was introduced, together with a sharp reduction of urban rents. These steps marked the beginning of the confiscatory and redistributive phase of the revolution.

Under these circumstances, the make up of the government had to undergo drastic changes. The government was radicalized in the months between January, 1959, and March, 1960.

Although tensions were present in connection with the public trials and executions of Batista's supporters, serious discontent grew, following the Agrarian Reforms Law. The United States protested the expropriation initiated under the Agrarian Law.

In February, 1960, following the visit to Havana of the Soviet Deputy Minister, Cuba signed a major trade agreement with the Soviet Union. Among other products, Cuba was going to have Soviet oil.

In June, 1960, the three big American oil companies refused to refine Soviet oil, and cut off further imports of oil to Cuba. The oil companies' dispute with Cuba galvanized Washington into action. The United States immediately cut off the rest of Cuba's sugar quota

for 1960, some 700,000 tons. Further, President Eisenhower accepted a recommendation of the CIA to begin to arm and to train Cuban exiles. And Cuba expropriated the foreign oil refineries.

The fact that an invasion was close was known in and out of Cuba. At last, in April, 1961, the Bay of Pigs invasion took place but was a dismal failure.

On August 6, 1960, a large part of the American investments in Cuba were nationalized. This was followed by nationalization of all big business in October, 1960.

Following the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the United States turned to other methods of dealing with Castro: to isolate the Cuban regime and strangle it economically. On October 19, 1960, the United States put an embargo on all exports to Cuba except medicines and certain foodstuffs.

As Cuban-American relations deteriorated, closer ties with the Soviet Union developed. The Soviet Union moved quickly. New trade and cultural agreements were signed and increased economic and technical aid was sent to Cuba.

The problems that faced the revolutionary government were: poverty and destitution, illiteracy, unemployment, and disease. Behind these were the inequalities and the chronic stagnation of a semi-colonial economy.

Synopsis of Socio-economic conditions in Cuban Countryside

A survey which was done by the Catholic youth organization showed that before the revolution agricultural workers and peasants hardly ever ate meat, milk or eggs.[1] Only 4 per cent of all rural

families consumed meat regularly; rice furnished 24 per cent of the average diet; kidney beans 23 per cent and root crops 22 per cent. [2]

In 1958, Cuba had one rural hospital with ten beds. In 1950, 13 per cent of the population had a history of typhoid, 14 per cent of tuberculosis, and over one-third had intestinal parasites.

In the mid-1950's, 60 per cent of Cuba's rural families lived in dwellings with earth floors and roof of palm leaves. Two-thirds of the rural houses did not have washrooms; only 1/14 of the houses had electricity. [3]

There was a great difference between rural and urban areas in capitalist Cuba, just as in other capitalist countries.

By 1958, 87 per cent of urban areas had electric lights (dwelling), but only 9 per cent of rural areas. 85 per cent of rural houses had to use rural water (e.g. river). 43 per cent of urban houses, and 3 per cent of rural houses had internal lavatories. 15 per cent of the urban houses and one per cent of the country houses had baths. [4]

The most obvious fact about Cuban education was the lack of oppurtunity for rural children to attend school.

Cuban law madeeight years of school attendance compulsory. But government officials did not supply the teachers, schools, and equipment to make enforcement of the law possible. Of course, rich children had private schools ready for them to attend.

23.6 per cent of the people, almost one-fourth, could not read and write. In 1958, the actual proportion of children aged 7 to 14 who attended school, was close to five out of ten. [5]

In short, before the revolution, practically nothing was ever

built in the countryside, neither roads, nor hospitals, nor schools. Most of the public works were undertaken only in the capital of the country. Revolutionary Cuba inherited an overpopulated capital in a seriously deprived countryside.

The major reforms which the new regime instituted during the first year in power were: land reform, education, housing and welfare. In this thesis, I will deal only with land reform, which was the biggest problem that the revolutionary regime had to face.

Footnotes

[1] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez: "The Cuban Revolution and the Peasantry", World Marxist Review, vol 8, no. 3, 1965, p. 13.

[2] James O'Connor: "Cuba: Its Political Economy", Cuba in Revolution, (ed.), 1972, p. 58.

[3] James O'Connor, Ibid., p. 58.

[4] Hugh Thomas: Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971, p. 1104.

[5] Waldo Frank: Cuba Prophetic Island, New York: Marzann and Munsell, Inc. Publishers, 1961, p. 18-19.

Chapter V

LAND REFORM IN CUBA

1. Characteristic of Agriculture Before the Revolution

a) Agriculture in 18th and 19th century

The Cuban economy is thought to have been dominated by the production of sugar cane. But this wasn't always the case. The victory of sugar over other production is a late development in Cuban history. Until the turn of the 18th century agriculture and ranching were small in scale. [1]

b) Agriculture in the 20th century

Cuban agriculture and ranching were small in scale before the American domination. It was the domination of the United States and the acceptance of the Platt Amendment which encouraged the sugar industry to turn from small-scale to large-scale plantations.

The United States ratified a tariff pact which gave to Cuban sugar preference in the American market. As a result sugar production began to dominate the Cuban economy. Sugar mills expanded their capacity and size. But at the same time the number of mills declined. For example, the number of mills was 1,190 in 1877, and 161

in 1956. The capacity to handle large quantities of cane expanded: by 1959 the 28 largest producers of cane were holding 20 per cent of Cuba's farm land and one fifth of Cuba's soil. United States owners controlled 54 per cent of Cuban grinding capacity, and produced 40 per cent of the island's crop.[2]

Before the revolution, the most important foreign investment in Cuba was that of the United States of America.

Table VII

FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN CUBA (in millions of dollars)

Year	U.S.	Total
1900	--	50
1913	220	400
1929	1000	1000
1958	1200	1200

Source: Hugh Thomas, Cuba or Pursuit of Freedom, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971, p. 1184.

Cuba ranked third among Latin American countries in the value of United States direct investment in 1953. American participation was more than 90 per cent in telephone and electric services, and almost one-fourth of bank deposits, and about 50 per cent in public services.[3]

The above kind of investment caused a monopolistic situation in almost every branch of the economy. So far as agriculture is concerned, the traditional small-scale farming necessarily declined with the growth of large-scale farming. This trend toward large plantations encouraged the development of dependent cultivators who needed the mill to grind their cane to finance their crop.

Sugar accounted for 80 to 90 per cent of Cuba's export;

and for a third of the country's income. The economy was based on sugar, and sugar was geared to the American market. It suffered from the cyclical fluctuations of that market.

c) Work conditions

To run the sugar industry a massive labor force was required. Decendants of former slaves, pauperized small holders, and Haitian and Jamaican migrants composed the labor force. The result was the growth of a large rural proletariat forced to sell its labor power in the market. There were about 500,000 cane cutters and 50,000 mill workers.[5]

The sugar harvest is concentrated within three or four months. After that, not many workers are needed for cane plantation and weeding; and only a few are required to service the processing mills. Thus hundreds of thousands of sugar workers worked only three or four months a year and lived in the most miserable social conditions.[6]

The sugar industry established the system of a single dominant crop in the country, and also produced a large labor force caught in an economic cycle alternating between prolonged periods of hunger and short periods of hard activity.[7]

In these circumstances and these work and wage conditions, it was very easy to produce cheap sugar and cattle. Sugar was three centavos a pound and cattle, six centavos a pound (100 centavos= 1 peso= 1 dollar). It is not surprising if the 500,000 agricultural laborers, of whom around 300,000 did not have a job for nine months of the year could hardly afford to buy even this cheap sugar and could hardly buy second-grade meat.[8]

d) Types of land ownership

Cuban land, which had once been distributed widely, became concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. Two-thirds of the land was not cultivated by the traditional peasant methods. The latifundists, big United States sugar companies and their local partners reduced thousands to proletarian status after the national liberation war against Spain. As a result, large-scale farming grew, and small-scale farmers declined. The result was the domination of latifundia in agriculture.

In January, 1959, out of 9 million hectares of arable land less than 2.5 million were held by small peasants who did not own more than 5 caballerias (67 hectares) each. The poorer peasants who owned less than 25 hectares each, cultivated a total of 1,021,810 hectares. The distribution of land in this category is shown below.

Table VIII

DISTRIBUTION OF LAND OWNERSHIP IN CUBA

(LESS THAN 25 HECTARES) JANUARY 1959

	no. of farms	%	total area*	%
Under 5 hectares	32,195	28.93	86,033	8.41
From 5 to 10 hectares	30,305	27.23	210,706	20.62
From 10 to 25 hectares	48,778	43.83	725,071	71.05
Total	111,276		1,021,810	100.18

*hectares

Source: C.R. Rodriguez, Ibid, p. 13

Knowing that the above figure is based on 1946 census it can be assumed by 1959, because of constant impoverishment of the peasants that farms were sub-divided even further, until about 140,000 peasant households owned under 25 hectares.

Forty to fifty per cent of the area of latifundia was devoted to livestock raising. [9]

In 1959 there were around 500,000 farm labourers. Less than 20,000 owned their lands. One hundred thousand were sharecroppers, tenant farmers who paid high rent and whose status was worse than that of medieval serfs. These sharecroppers were forced to give the landowner 30 to 50 per cent and sometimes 60 per cent of the crop they cultivated.

e) Land under cultivation

In 1958 there were 2,379,103 hectares of land under cultivation. Pre-revolutionary Cuba was characterized by a scandalous underutilization of resources. Less than half of the arable land was effectively cultivated; and unemployment averaged 25 per cent of the labor force. The big companies who owned the big plantations, could always count on the reserve army of the unemployed; hence they did not see any reason to introduce mechanization, fertilizers, irrigation, or any other methods of scientific production.

f) Modes of production

Two types of production centres existed in Cuba: the large latifundias and small farms. The latifundia operated along capitalist lines.

From an early date Cuba lacked a large subsistence sector; it was integrated into the world market economy. As early as 1899, over two-thirds of the rural labor force was engaged in producing cash crops. Less than one quarter of labor force was engaged in

subsistence farming.

By the middle of the 20th century, subsistence farming was totally abolished, and most agricultural production was for export. Agricultural production developed along monopolistic lines, and all sorts of monopolistic controls were exercised over the products. Restrictions in the rural economy, and controls in the labor marked were not associated with a system of traditional agriculture. In short, Cuba's economic institutions were predominantly capitalistic from their earlier days, a characteristic which makes Cuba stand out from most other developing countries.

2. Cuban agriculture after 1959 - agrarian reform

First Stage of Land Reform

a) Introduction

Agrarian reform was central to Castro's conception of Revolution. He called for agrarian reform in "History Will Absolve Me", at the Moncada trial of October 6, 1953. He repeated the call in the Sierra Maestra Manifesto which was issued on July 12, 1957; and he renewed the call right through the war. Agrarian reform was mentioned as one of his first two rebel laws on October 10, 1957. Lastly, he returned to the Sierra to sign the first of a series of agrarian laws.[10]

Immediately after their arrival in the Sierra Maestra, Castro and his followers began to carry out a policy designed to demonstrate to the peasants that the revolutionary guerrillas were their allies against the latifundists who ruled over them, and who oppressed and

exploited them. They would respect peasants' property and would fight for their well being.[11]

b) Political tactics

The first law of agrarian reform was careful not to mention the problem of foreign-owned properties, and it was ambiguous about latifundia too. It simply said that they would be forbidden without specifying any formal limit.

By September and October, 1958, Batista lost the support of all latifundists and sugar refiners. In the province of Las Villas, the owners of sugar refineries started to pay taxes to the rebel army, and thus accepted it as a government. At this point, it would have been a mistake to mention and deal directly with local and foreign latifundists. This would have caused the latter to rally around Batista again.

Also it was not a wise decision for the new leaders to nationalize all large holdings as soon as they came to power. If they had done so, it might have been disastrous, because the revolution in the beginning lacked managerial, organizational, and technical personnel to organize production on the land which would have come into its possession.

It was necessary at this point to coexist with this class because of its political power, and in the meantime to try to prepare the ground work for state-conducted agriculture, to train workers for at least minimal technical skills, to mechanize agriculture, and to train managerial personnel.

Besides, at the time latifundists thought the revolutionary

government could be changed by the methods which had always been used to turn down the petty bougeois revoltionaries. Fortunately, later developments showed they were mistaken. [12]

c) Aims of the first stage of land reform

Agrarian reform was aimed against the existence of latifundia and also of minifundia. The agrarian reform of May 17, 1959, proved that bourgeois reformists were wrong. For the first time in the Americas, revolutionary changes in the landholding system and rural social structure were introduced.

The promise to abolish latifundia contained in law No. 3 was carried out, and working peasants received land free of charge. This was a main aim of revolution. As far as its main aspect is concerned, agrarian reform did achieve its basic purpose: the destruction of latifundias and the inhuman systems of exploitation of man, which was the main characteristic of prerevolutionary Cuba.

The revolution also had to convince small peasants and to prove by practical measures that their property was not going to be taken from them. On the contrary, the revolution would help them to gain a better living.

The law of May 17, 1959 sought to create and strengthen a small-peasant bougeoisie.

An important issue was differentiation among the rural bourgeoisie, landlords, and working peasants. It was essential for the peasants themselves to see and realize that their self-interest was linked to the revolution.

The revolution concentrated on the countryside, which was the

most underpriviledged section. The prime aim was to give the peasants access to education and medical aid, to help them financially to make the best use of the land, and thus supply the population with food and industry with raw materials. Nationalization and expropriation of the property of sectors hostile to socialism was another way of helping to realize this aim.

d) Effects of the first stage of land reform

When victory was in sight, Fidel Castro gave the policy of the Rebel Army on the Agrarian question the form of a program. The famous Sierra Maestra law No. 3 - the first agrarian law of the revolution - came into being.

The preamble to the agrarian reform law makes it clear that:

-The progress of Cuba depends on diversification of industry and agriculture.

-It is preferable to replace production on large land holdings with cooperative production.

-Agrarian reform is not going to be just a change of title to property but a continuing process under government guidance and affecting the entire structure of the economy.

The Agrarian reform law of May 17, 1959, laid the present foundations of both the private and state sectors in agriculture.

The first stage of land reform law was just like other reformist land reform laws, except than on some points it was more radical.

The land reform law was opposed to latifundia, and minifundia. There were maximum and minimum limits for land holdings, with some

exceptions.

The law prohibited all land sales, except to the State, and all exchange and transfers of privately owned land. All divisions, sales or legal acts of various kinds, carried out after January, 1959, were declared void. Landholdings in excess of 30 caballerias (402.6 hectares = approximately a thousand acres) were confiscated.

Part of the land in excess of this limit must be expropriated and distributed among landless peasants or those who own less than the vital minimum. Two caballerias (27 hectares = 66 acres) were regarded as vital minimum - the size of farm which was considered a "life-providing minimum" for a family of five. If cultivation was afterwards neglected, the land was supposed to be handed back to the state. [13] Properties under the maximum limit in size were not expropriated unless they were rented out to tenant farmers or sharecroppers, or were occupied by squatters.

The original intention was that the remainder of the confiscated land would be cultivated by cooperatives, but this idea was never realized. Instead, there were state farms: eighty per cent of the land formerly held by the large estates was used to form these collective farms. These were to be run by the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).

The small private farmers who had been working the land they did now own received the ownership of their land. When their land fell below the "vital minimum" of two caballerias they were given enough additional land to bring them up to five caballerias (about 165 acres).

In order to avoid a decrease in production the law permitted

various exceptions.

Farms whose yields are 50 per cent higher than the national average, when only crops are concerned; and those cattle ranches where the number of head of cattle per caballeria (33 acres) is higher than the national average - are among the exceptions, although they are not allowed to possess more than 100 caballerias (3300 acres or 1,342 hectares) in any case.

The law also set out to free the sugar colonies from the mills. Companies would not, after the harvest of 1960, be allowed to run sugar plantations unless their shares were both registered and owned by Cubans. Nor would anyone be able to have shares in sugar plantations if they were employees or owners of, or shareholders in, sugar mills. However, land not given over to sugar could be owned by companies with their shares duly registered. [14]

The law treats foreign land owners as it does Cuban property owners. It is not stated anywhere in the law that foreign landowners with holdings within the maximum permitted size limits, are not allowed to keep their properties. The exception which was mentioned in the above paragraph concerning farm units with higher than - national - average - productivity - this regulation also applied to foreign-owned enterprises.

The agrarian reform law itself did not eliminate foreign property-owning in Cuba, but a series of other laws in 1960 and 1961 affected foreign ownership in Cuba.

The reform beneficiaries did not pay for the distributed land; this was given to them free of charge. The law determined that the value of the land for purposes of idemnification, was based on the

owners' own assessment for these purposes. As is clear, declared values were very low, and compensation was not a threat to Cuba's budget. Besides compensation was promised in twenty - year bonds, bearing an annual interest of 4.5 per cent. As it turned out, no compensation was ever paid.

It is very difficult to give precise figures on the effects of the first stage of land reform. The implementation of the agrarian law of 1959 overlapped with two other laws of July and October, 1960.

The law of July 6, 1960, was passed to abolish the U.S. sugar quota. By this law all the U.S. owned properties in agriculture and other branches of the economy were taken over. By the law of October 13, 1960, the government decided upon the nationalization of all large private enterprises in the country. This resulted, in the agro-industrial sector, in the confiscation of about a hundred sugar mills and their land, which was approximately one million hectares.

Finally, an amendment to Article 24 of the Constitution allowed the State to confiscate the property of those who left the country or who were found to be engaged in counterrevolution.

In December 22, 1959, the law of "Recuperation of ill-gained wealth" allowed the confiscation of Batista's wealth and that of others who had enriched themselves under the dictatorship.

Table IX

LAND EXPROPRIATION IN CUBA IN MAY, 1961

	surface in hectares	per cent
Agrarian reform law	1,199,184	27.0
Recuperation of ill-gained wealth	163,214	3.7
Donation to INRA	322,590	7.3

	surface in hectares	per cent
Voluntary sales and Article 24	581,757	13.1
Nationalization law (No. 851)	1,261,587	28.4
Nationalization law (No. 8901)	910,547	20.5
Total	4,438,879	100.0

Source: Michael Gutelman, Op. Cit, p. 246.

Table X

THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN CUBA IN 1961

Size of Farms	Number of farms	%	Thousands of hect.	%
Up to 67 hectares	154,703	93.24	2,348.1	52.75
67 to 134 hectares	6,062	3.65	607.5	13.63
134 to 268 hectares	3,105	1.87	610.3	13.70
268 to 402 hectares	1,457	.87	507.6	11.40
Over 402 hectares	592	.35	377.5	8.48
Total	165,919		4,451.0	

Source: Huberman and Sweezy, Socialism in Cuba, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969, p. 112.

Cuban agriculture was characterized by an unequal division of land, even after reforms of 1959-60. At that time the private sector accounted for 56 per cent and the state sector for 44 per cent. Over a quarter of the countryside was in the hands of small farmers who constituted less than one per cent of the Cuban population.

The reform produced a rural bourgeoisie in the full sense of the term, this social group numbered around 10,000, and included the remainder of the old latifundists, the rural bourgeoisie exploiting the land by capitalist methods (e.g. the big rice-growers and cattle ranchers), and another variety of rural exploiter - the rich peasants.

The revolutionary government sustains these individual land-owners, giving them credit and resources and buying their surplus

produce. They can sell individually, provided it is not in wholesale quantities. They cannot sell over a certain quantity in each case. At the same time, a ruthless war was declared against the profiteering middlemen, who bought farm produce for nothing and sold it to consumers at exorbitant prices. INRA improved the functioning of its purchasing organizations, which reached to every peasant. Therefore, the elimination of the middle man did not prevent the peasant from placing his produce on the market.

The 10,000 surviving members of the bourgeoisie and landlord classes in the agricultural sector of the economy constituted the last holdout of the capitalist classes, since the nationalization of the industry owned by Cuban capitalists had already begun in 1960.

The United States would insist on adequate compensation. On 11 October one aircraft dropped three bombs on a sugar mill in Pinar Del Rio. Cuba protested to the United States. The United States government or the CIA were now prepared to help the Cuban exiles with arms.

In the closing months of 1960 and 1961, the CIA and its agents still operating in Cuba, exerted every effort to control the rural areas. They used their military basis and the above mentioned 10,000 rural bourgoisie as a political instrument of counter-revolution. And they used propaganda to make peasants believe that the revolution would deprive them of their property and that Castro's assurances were intended to deceive them.

Mistakes were made which helped the enemies of the revolution in 1961 and 1962, for example the expropriation of small holders. Though in some cases it was legally justified, this gave the enemy an oppurtunity to deceive working peasants, who saw peasants holding less

than 67 hectares deprived of their properties, who they were not convinced were engaged in counter-revolutionary activities.

3. The Second Stage of Land Reform

a) Ideology and Introduction

As a result of Cuba's turn toward Marxism-Leninism, the agrarian reform in that country has aimed at wiping out not only the large private landowners, but also small private farming as a whole. Besides, the revolutionaries knew very well that the 10,000 landowners who were left from the first stage of land reform were their primary potential opponents. They realized that the only correct strategy was to separate the mass of working peasants from the rich and powerful minority which owned as much land as the 200,000 families of working peasants together.

To be able to destroy the anti-socialist class of bourgeois landlords in rural Cuba, the land reform had to change its refomist political form,which is the characteristic of many land reform programs in different areas of the world. The structure of landownership had to be compatible with the socialist content of the revolution.

On October 13, 1963 the second agrarian reform was introduced.

b) Aims and effects of the second stage of land reform

The object was to nationalize, through purchase, the lands of the remaining 10,000 members of the rural bourgeoisie and landlord class. The radical intent of the Second Agrarian Reform was executed relatively easily because it had the backing of the small peasants. The almost total absence of counterrevolutionary activity in the

countryside since 1963 can be attributed to this basic step.

The Second Agrarian Reform Law promulgated the confiscation of all holdings in excess of five caballerias (about 67 hectares or 165 acres). As a result of this law, 1,800,000 hectares of land were transfered to the state.

In the course of one day, under the direct supervision of the party, all holdings over 67 hectares were taken over throughout the country. The rural bourgeoisie was paralyzed and could do nothing to stir up trouble among the small peasants, who everywhere supported the reform.

The Second Agrarian Reform brought a shift in the balance between the private and State sector in favor of the State sector. The private sector at this point after revolution contained some 3,563,100 hectares (39.3 per cent of the total); and the state sector, 5,513,700 hectares (60.1 per cent of the total).

After the Second Agrarian Reform Law was promulgated the government took over more than 60 per cent of the sugar fields and 60 per cent of the cattle.

The second stage of the reform was able to realize its political intention, the elimination of the internal counterrevolution. It was also able to consolidate the State farm units which up to then had been much dispersed and fragmented.

Another issue which is important and should be mentioned is that no real effort was made to compensate the former landowners.

4. Characteristics of Cuban Land Reform

The revolution was largely rooted in the countryside, and land

reform was the major tool for concentrating on the rural area, formerly the most underpriviledged part of the country.

The urban population is being ruralized through large scale mobilization of voluntary labor. Financial and physical resources are directed toward the countryside, and the urban slumification characteristic of many third-world nations is reversed. Havana, the capital city, shows a declining proportion of the national population. The net migration movement has changed since 1963 and started to be the opposite of what usually exists in developing countries (i.e. where the movement is to the capital city). For example, in 1967 28,203 people moved from Havana to Oriente province, but 24,989 people migrated from Oriente to Havana.

The main effort to the land reform was to redistribute land income and to provide social services for the formerly exploited rural population of Cuba. The reform demolished the old latifundists who were ruling elite, and changed the structure of landholding. It nationalized and expropriated all the large land holdings and the property of the sectors hostile to socialism.

One can say that Cuban agriculture has gone through two revolutions. First was to introduce stage I of agrarian reform in 1959, which had the characteristics of liberal reformist classical land reform elsewhere. The second, in 1963, was radical and compatible with the emerging socialist nature of the revolution.

The reform was directed against latifundia and minifundia for the following reasons:

1- Cuba did not follow the classic path which certain other countries have followed such as Mexico in 1911 and Bolivia in 1952.

The Cubans did not divide the land into small plots. If Cuba had merely sub-divided land holdings, the agricultural future of the country would have been endangered. Many workers would have been left without land, or the divided land would often have been too small for a family to support itself.

2-All the lands have distinct characteristics. Some land is more fertile than others, so they are used for different things. For example, if we take a sugar plantation into small plots, the new owners will tend to cut the production of sugar and will start to raise for their own consumption crops for which, perhaps, the soil is not suited.

The government tried to achieve intensive production by introducing "state farms". The reform law encouraged replacement of large holdings by cooperative production. It put the emphasis on a kind of agrarian reform which is not just land redistribution by a mere reshuffling of titles to property. Cuban land reform was a process under governmental guidance which affected all sectors of the entire economy.

An important feature of Cuban agrarian reform is the continued existence of a private sector in agriculture. The revolutionary government sustains these individual landowners. It gives them credit and resources, and buys their surplus produce, whatever they do not need for their own consumption. What the government is trying to do is to raise the productivity of small farmers, while respecting their status as private owners. The latter sell nearly two-thirds of their produce to central or local state organizations. They have every right to own their plots and till them, either individually or

collectively as they wish. They will make the choice themselves. They are allowed to sell their produce individually, to individual buyers other than the state, but not in large quantitids.

The government believes that with the passage of time, and by the following policies, the small farmers will progressively become a part of the National common land reform.

1- Privately owned land cannot be sold to anybody but the state. It can be transfered by inheritance, but only from parents to children. The government believes that children of small farmers will not be as interested as their parents in keeping the land, because of their access to higher education and the existence of unlimited job oppurtunities in industry in the modernized collective agriculture, and in public services. As a result, many children inheriting land will sell or transfer the land to the state.

2- The Cuban revolutionary government is very well aware that the existence of small private property tends towards a return to capitalism.

There isn't a free market where peasants can display and sell their produce. By fixing just prices for the produce of small farmers, the latter are far from becoming rich. Besides, the small farmer cannot use his income to buy land or acquire machinery, for such sales to private individuals are prohibited. Priority is given to the State in buying land, and in cases where the State does not want to acquire the land, priority is given to those who do not have enough land.

3- Aged peasants who have no relatives and are too old to cultivate their land could sell their plot to the state, and in return be provided with an annual sum from the government ensuring them

a decent standard of living.

4- By introducing mechanization and different methods of extensive prodiction, the state sector has been progressively modernized and technified. This has resulted in a more rapid increase of productivity than in the private sector. This process is believed to encourage the private owner to transfer from private to the public sector.

The major negative affect of small peasantry is the rise of a petty bourgeoisie mentality with all the acquisitive and self-centered traits and habits specific to this class.

The revolutionary government aimed to curtail the scale and freedom of operation of the private sector. In 1967, the government took over an unknown number of small holdings around Havana and other big cities and gave the land to the collective farms supplying the urban areas. Also, the government encouraged the mutual aid groups and the common use of manpower and equipment by guaranteeing a certain income to the private farmers thus cooperating.[15]

Private agriculture has largely been eliminated in Cuba. But those private farmers still remaining in the economically active population, with the exception of few physicians, are the richest people in Cuba. Moreover this private sector employs about 60,000 workers. This shows the persistance of capitalist relations in Socialist Cuba.

The last feature of Cuban land reform that I shall mention is that, although compensation was promised, no landowners, large or otherwise, were compensated for the land taken from them. Large members of former landowners have fled into exile. That part of

the confiscated land which was given to poor peasants was given free of charge.

One of the major aims of the land reform was to achieve a system in agriculture where the land could be utilized in an optimum way, rationally, determining at each time to produce the crop which most benefits the nation.

5. The National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA)

INRA was created as an autonomous entity with its own juridical personality for the purpose of applying and enforcing agrarian reform law. As soon as INRA was set up, it became the most important government agency.

From the beginning INRA was charged with more than expropriation and distribution of land and the organization of farms and cooperatives. As Edward Boornstein put it:

> "it also engaged in a variety of other activities. It set up people's stores [16] to sell goods to the campesinos at reasonable prices and to free them from usury; it built new housing, sometimes whole new villages, including community and sport centers; it built and operated schools and hospitals and sent teams of doctors and mobile medical dispensaries into the countryside; it built warehouses and factories to store and process agricultural products; it granted agricultural credit to farms and cooperatives; it constructed roads; it imported tractors, bulldozers, incubators, insecticides, fertilizers, animal foodstuffs, material for constructing new agricultural institutions, and chickens, pigs and bulls for breeding; it carried out land clearing and reforestation programs; it sponsored courses on agriculture at Cuba's universities; and it administered nationalized industries, until the Minister of Indistry was formed, after which it still retained control of a few industries engaged in processing farm products." [17]

INRA promotes agrarian cooperatives. INRA is not simply

the power to establish co-operatives; it is in effect directed to establish them "whenever possible". Evidently, the co-operative is envisioned as the key institution in the new Cuban landholding system. The agrarian co-operatives organized by INRA on lands available to it under the provisions of this law are under its direction, and INRA reserves the right to appoint the manager.

During 1959-61 the three following types of agricultural enterprises were organized by INRA:

1) Co-operatives - most of these were former large specialized or semi-specialized landholdings, and derived their name from their principal activity.

2) Farm Units Under Direct Administration - These were created on former large cattle ranches. These units could be considered as state farms.[18]

3) Sugar Co-operatives - this co-operative rapidly changed from a real co-operative and was subordinated to a centralized administrative management.[19]

Towards the beginning of 1961, the co-operatives other than cane began to be changed into people's farms, and in 1962 cane co-operatives were also thus changed.[20] This tendency was further reinforced by the idea of "people's farms", similar to the system of collective agriculture in the Soviet Union. On people's farms the state owns the land and labor is paid on a wage basis without sharing in profit. The following are the reasons for this change:

1- To assure a centralized distribution of rationed means of production.

2- To co-ordinate technical assistance and the plans for

diversification.

The farms varied greatly in soil, location, and ownership of cattle, machinery and equipment. If these farms were run by cooperatives, the variations would produce differences in profit and wages.

In August, 1962, the sugar co-operatives were changed into "sugar farms" which had wage and management policies idintical to those of people's farms.[21]

In short, after 1962, all the confiscated land which was not sub-divided was managed in the framework of state farms. The size of the production unit varied considerably both in people's farms and sugar farms, from 200 hectares to 60,000 hectares.[22]

In 1963, the administrative differences between people's farms and sugar farms were eliminated, and all were simply called "state farms". In 1966, there were 575 state farms whose area varied from 13,000 to 100,000 hectares.[23]

The Credit Bank which existed in pre-revolutionary Cuba was incorporated in INRA in early 1960. A Department of Agricultural and Industrial Credit was established which made credits more easily available to all peasants. It was abolished in 1961 because of its involvement in red tape. A Credit Department under the National Association of Small Farmers was established, which gave loans to those who have less than one caballeria. The bigger holdings still had to apply to the National Bank.

Loans were classified as:

1) Development credits (e.g. acquiring the basic means of production).

2) Productive credits (e.g. seeds and fertilizers).

The first type of loan should be repaid in a period of more than one year, and second through the agricultural year - after the sale of the crop. [24]

Loans are given according to the size of holdings, the cultivated area, production and general circumstances of the applicant. The revolutionary government has given such loans to more than 200,000 peasant families. It requires 4 per cent interest for less than 5,000 pesos, and 6 per cent for larger loans.

Later, in 1963, the National Bank of Cuba took charge of all the credits.

6. Effects of Land Reform, and Characteristics of Cuban Agriculture After Revolution

a-Characteristics of Agriculture

The Cuban economy, after as before the revolution, is largely based on agriculture. But the main difference in these two periods is that as a result of land reform large private landholdings were abolished and nationalized. Now, state holdings are the major feature of the Cuban countryside. Agricultural production is becoming mechanized, and mechanization has not produced rural unemployed refugees escaping from the poverty of countryside to the cities.

The aim of the revolution was to bring well-being to the most underpriviledged part of Cuba, mainly the countryside. Therefore it was rooted in rural Cuba, and most of the investment made in Cuba after the revolution has gone to the agricultural sector. Government inputs into the economy continues to favour agriculture. [25]

Public control over the basic relations of production was

established, which this has made for more egalitarian norms.

Agrarian reform put an end to the exploitation of the tiller of the soil by the middle man. It released the farmers from debt, and from loans up to 30 per cent interest annually. [26] A ruthless war was declared against the profiteering middle man who bought peasants produce for next to nothing and then resold it at an exorbitant price.

Co-operative farming created better conditions for establishing modernized farm and higher productivity through the use of machinery on large tracts of land. Individual small farmers cannot achieve such goals by themselves. Besides, the Cuban economy is no longer based on the will of a few elite individuals.

Individual small peasants still have their share in production, especially in growing tobacco, coffee, milk, and crops. But their relative share in total production has declined, and tends to decline further in favor of the state sector. These individual farmers enjoy State aid in various farms. However, the government's main purpose is to reinforce the State sector and to attract individual farmers more and more to that sector, by the greatest availability of social services and facilities, clubs, housing, and so on, in the state sector. By fixing prices and preventing further land division and sales, the government hopes eventually to abolish private holdings.

Agrarian reform relieved more than 100,000 peasants from rents, and it released sharecroppers from giving more than one-third of their crop to landowners. Land reform gave the renters, sharecropper, and the squatter free possession of the land. Land taxes were reduced and finally abolished in 1967. [27]

During the years 1963-65, fundamental changes were made in the structure of the political and economic system, and new decisions were made. The new economic strategy selected sugar and cattle as the main area of agricultural specialization. This key shift in policy meant a relative turning away from earlier efforts toward general industrialization. The main reason for this switch in economic policy was, that the condition of soil and climate are favourable for both sugar and cattle, and in the case of sugar, large industry exists and there is also an accumulated know-how. Further, Cuba's relative lack of a wide range of natural resources, accentuated by the American trade boycott, made even more logical the decisions taken.

b) Types of Landownership

Land reform brought structural changes in the land tenure system of Cuba. By liquidation and expropriation of big plantations, private agriculture has largely been eliminated. All large and medium holdings were seized by the government and the remaining small holders, except for a small percentage, were converted into employees of the state.

The aim was to wipe out not only the large private landowner, but also private farming as a whole. By 1963, the state owned 70 per cent of all the land in Cuba, including most of the best land. [28]

There are two kinds of land holdings in Cuba since the revolution:

1- State ownership

2- Private ownership

After the first stage of land reform at the end of 1962,

the State sector owned 44 per cent of the land in Cuba, with 56 per cent in the private sector.

After the second stage of agrarian reform, the state sector covered 60.1 per cent of the land in 1963, and the private sector covered 39.3 per cent of the land. The State owned more than 60 per cent of the sugar fields and 60 per cent of the cattle.

At present, the state sector accounts for just under half of the cattle, and grown 75 per cent of sugar cane, and 100 per cent of kanaf, cotton, and other crops like these. It is true that the individual peasant has an important part in growing tobacco, coffee and root crops, but this relative share in total production is decreasing.[29]

There are some 200,000 small farmers. Seventy per cent of the Cuban land is nationalized and 30 per cent is now owned by the private sector.[30]

Further, in 1967, the government launched what was called a "revolutionary offensive". It took over an unknown number of small holdings, and paid salaries to some small farmers to promote collective work and mutual aid among themselves.[31]

c) Modes of Production

Perhaps I could say there are two modes of production in Cuba after the 1959 revolution. One is the state sector and the other, the private sector. However, it should be known there is a fine line between these two sectors.

The State sector is based on a socialist mode of production and turns on collective farms. Government owns the means of production,

employs farmers, and gives them stable wages and year round employment.

The private sector can employ workers, but can not pay them higher or lower wages than the government section. Besides, the private sectors have to sell their surplus to the State. Within certain limits they can sell to individual buyers. Further, the freedom of operation of the private sector is curtailed by choosing different policies. For example, by adopting a policy of just price regulation, they can not spend their income for buying machine or land, because their sale is prohibited to private individuals.

d) Land Under Cultivation

State farms allow land use in the most practical ways: intensive production by utilizing machinery, irrigation, fertilization and large scale technology on a large scale. With the system of socialist ownership, the land is used in an optimum way. The State determines at each moment that whatever crop benefits the nation shall be produced.

Government, by adopting a policy of "price regulation" encourages peasants to grow some crops rather than others. And, by giving them agricultural facilities (fertilizers, machinery, credit) the state facilitates better utilization of land in the national interest.

As I mentioned before, peasants were given land free of charge, but if they neglected to cultivate the land, the land was supposed to be handed back to the State.[32]

In 1958, there were 2,379,103 hectares of land under cultivation. By 1967, this increased by 56 per cent. That is, it reached

3,711,800 hectares and it is still increasing. [33]

e) Work condition

Farmers are provided with steady wages, and they do not have to fear hunger and unemployment anymore. They are also provided with social services, housing, clubs and nursery facilities, none of which was available before.

They do not pay rent anymore, and are also relieved from the obligations they formerly had to landowners. The State reduced, and finally in 1967, abolished all their taxes. [34]

The peasant has the right to own his land and till it individually or collectively. He enjoys State aid in the form of cheap bank credit, a supply of machinery, technical aid, fertilizers, etc. He does not deal with profiteering middle-men anymore, but generally sells his surplus to the State.

This is not to deny that there are serious scarcities of services and materials in the rural sector.

Now they have their party organization, their youth organization, women's organization, and so on.

The Revolution has fostered a new comcept of man which has changed the psychology of the rural population, and has given many of them strong motivation for work. Before the revolution, people from the countryside were regarded as inferior, ignorant and uncivilized. But today the urban population is being ruralized through large-scale mobilization of voluntary labor. The problem of the socially inherited pattern of seasonal idleness in the countryside has at least partly been transended.

f) Social condition

The developmental revolution is largely rooted in the countryside. The rural sector is no longer the most underpriviledged part of the country. Efforts have been made to realize the urban population through large scale mobilization. The prime need was to give the peasants access to education, medical aid, and free education for their children. Free and vastly improved health services have brought undreamed benefits to the countryside.

In the following paragraphs, I intend to mention a few things about the achievement of revolutionary program as far as education and health of the rural population is concerned. Of course, I don't plan to go into detail, which requires more time and space than are available.

Since 1959, literacy centres have been in operation. Education was brought to most of the remote areas, where the illiteracy rate was very high. The important aspect of these educational programs is that the school went to countryside.

1961 was entitled "Education Year", the aim of the year of education was to make all people literate. This was done by teachers and students from primary school up to university level. By this policy they overcame the lack of teachers. On December 22, 1961, the alphabetization program officially ended, and the illiteracy rate went down from 23.6 per cent to 3.9 per cent. [35]

In mid 1961, private schools were nationalized and education became free and available to everybody.

After the literacy campaign ended, a program to elevate the educational level of workers and farmers began. As a result, thousands

of young men and women from peasant families have had courses to raise their technical training and their general education level.

The worker-farmer Faculties were created in 1964. Farmers and workers could go to University, technical or vocational schools. The University is no longer a middle-class school for training unproductive employees. For example, in 1968, 26 per cent of the students of the University of Santa Clara were workers and farmers. In the Nickel Plant of Nicaro, 70 per cent of the workers are enrolled in study courses. It should be mentioned that these are not special cases.[36]

In twelve years the number of scholarships has multiplied eighteen times, it increased from 15,698 in 1959 to 277,505 in 1970. There are thousands of farm laborers who go to study in the Soviet Union to learn problems of administration, machinery, and agricultural techniques.[37]

Workers and peasants have an educational oppurtunity in revolutionary Cuba unprecedented in Cuban history.

Health care in Cuba has undergone profound transformation. Rural medical services have dramatically improved the health of the country people.

The aim was to abolish the unequal distribution of medical services which existed in prerevolutionary Cuba.

Now people have free access to medical services. Each rural area has a polyclinic which has around 20 to 30 beds, and which deals with general medicine, abstetrics, and pediatrics. In the remote rural areas, dispensaries provide medical assistance. Surgical cases are sent to regional hospitals.

From 1959 to 1968, 92 new hospitals were built, 50 per cent of these were in rural areas.[38]

In 1958 there was only one rural hospital with ten beds in Cuba. In 1968 there were 47 rural hospitals with 1,300 beds and 50 dental and medical clinics, which did not exist before.[39]

Medical students, after they are graduated go to remote areas for practice for two years.

The revolution paid special attention to housing problems. The government reduced the rent of housing. On the average, 11,089 homes were built each year during the first five years of the revolution; 49 per cent of the total number were constructed in rural areas and were distributed on the basis of need. As a result, most rural slums have disappeared.[40]

As a United Nations official stated in 1969, 70 per cent of Cubans were living better than before the revolution, and the consumption capacity of the lower classes of the society has increased.[41]

7. Some Remaining Problems In Cuba

Cuba is confronted with the problem of the so-called population explosion, like that of many other underdeveloped countries. The annual net population growth rate is 2.3 per cent; almost 40 per cent of the population is made up of persons under 15 years of age. Production of every single item should be increased, and the effort of Cubans in this way must be considerable. As Fidel Castro stated:

> "To attain 1 per cent production growth rate, and double our income in eighty years, we must use at least 16 per cent of the gross national product. If the economy is to develop at a rate of no less than 5 per cent of the gross per capita product per year, we must invest 30 per cent of

the available gross national product." [42]
This heavy task is put upon the shoulders of the 32 per cent of the population engaged in furnishing goods or services (1970).

Talking about Cuba's problems we must take into consideration the distorted economic and technical infrastructure of agriculture, which was North American and imperialist in origin.

Most of the top administrative and technical personnel were American-oriented. By October, 1960, most of them had left Cuba. For example, out of the 300 agronomists working in Cuba in 1959, approximately 270 left the country. [43] Besides, many of the United States firms had kept their Cuban personnel in ignorance of the nature of the materials they were working with.

Therefore the revolutionary government had to keep factories and mines going with the least proportion of experienced and skilled personnel.

Cuba still is confronting the manpower problem. The problem is their lack of cadres, of men with high enough level of training who are capable of carrying out the complex task of production. These persons must be politically reliable as well as technically skilled.

Underemployment, theoretically abolished, still remains. There are more job openings than there are able bodied men and women entering the labor force. Today Cuba has a shortage of man power, especially in agriculture. There is still a tremendous seasonal demand for agricultural labor in the dry months from January through April, when not only sugar cane but also other major crops are harvested, and when preparation for the soil and planting of new crops takes place.

Education

Although there have been great improvements and achievements in education, and while expenditure in education has been high, educational needs are far from being fully met. There are still students who attend school for half days because of existing shortages in teachers and classrooms.

One of the problems faced by Cuba has been the shortage of teachers. This has been the consequence of several factors. On the one hand, the growth of the number of students absorbed the available supply of teachers. On the other hand, the flight of the professional class after 1960 left Cuba with a lack of educational resources. For example, in 1953 only one per cent of the people on the island had four years of college, or more and only 4 per cent had more than a high school education.

As Castro indicated, 1800 new senior high school teachers will be needed every year.[44]

Much remains to be done about the quality and quantity of the education. More schools are needed, many could be improved, and more material could be made available.

Health

Medical services have dramatically improved the health of rural and urban people in Cuba. Again the expansion of services demanded a large number of medical personnel. But here the government confronted the usual serious shortage stemming from the migration of physicians. For example, over 2000 doctors out of 6000 fled the island after the revolution took place.

In 1969 there were 1,200 more doctors than in 1959, but despite this increment the ratio of physicians per person had not improved, because of population increase.

Despite all the efforts that the revolutionary government has made, medical suppliers are still lacking and the health of the Cuban people, in certain respects, awaits major improvements.

Living Conditions

Underlying all the developments and achievements is the continuing difficult economic situation. Daily life is hard.

The rapid elimination of unemployment and the nominal salary increase expanded the wage earning mass, and as a result their purchasing power. All of a sudden, the internal demand for goods began to shoot up.

The management of the Cuban economy during the first two years of the Revolution was made easier by the existence of a large amount of reserves. As the revolution developed, the demand on resources grew. The utilized resources were reduced, difficulties began to show up. Among the first places where pressure on resources appeared was in dollar imports. The Cuban economy had to adjust to its resources. Priorities had to be given. The first shortage came in the spring of 1961, when shortages of basic foodstuffs suddenly appeared.

Cubans are still living on an austere diet; shoes and clothing are scarce. There are still shortages of housing, and there are lists of houses to be delivered. The usual complaints about shortages of consumer goods, the lack of much needed services, and other inconveniences and hardships of Cuban life are admitted.

Almost everything from the boiler in sugar mills to electric plugs had been built and worked according to American design. The whole port system was adapted to a foreign commerce monopolized by the United States. There are still limitations in transportation; tremendous efforts must be made in this field. And important new port facilities still are needed.

Cuba stands 90 miles away from the most powerful imperialist enemy. An enemy that does not hesitate to use all means to destroy the Cuban revolution. Therefore it has been necessary for Cuba despite the shortage of manpower to employ hundreds of thousands of men for the defense of the country.

Cuba has a unique situation so far as resources are concerned. It has specialized agriculture and an industry dependent on imported materials. It should not be forgotten that the Cuban has to import almost all the fuel which it needs: it is a country without coal and practically without hydraulic energy. Her iron ores contain chrome and this poses technical problems. All the energy for the light they use is imported. Cuba is a small country with a small internal market. Its resources are rich but not varied. As a result of these limitations, it is not surprising to see an unfavorable foreign balance of payment in Cuba, mainly with the Soviet Union.

There is some sign of decline in total agricultural output. The economic difficulties in production are related in part to a decline in productivity due to negligence and absenteeism in the labor force. It should be mentioned that absenteeism is an acute problem with which the revolutionary government is confronted, and against which have been used different policies in order to eliminate it.

Cuba shares cultural values from the Spanish colonial period which are antithetical to manual or productive labor, and work is still regarded as something shameful and degrading, or at least work is viewed with ambivalance. That is why there is an absence of good work habits in a large part of the Cuban population. In the long run the solution is to produce in the mass of the people a wholly new attitude toward work.

The great task of the revolution still is the task of forming a new man. The formation of the new man - a person with scientific and technical knowledge - a humanist culture, and a mentality that identifies personal and community interests as one and the same, are the aim of the Cuban educational system. None of these happens automatically and needs time, as the case of China shows so clearly.

Footnotes

[1] Eric R. Wolf, Peasants Wars of the Revolutionary Century, Harper and Row Publishers, New York: Evanston, 1969, p. 257.

[2] Eric R. Wolf, Ibid, p. 257.

[3] Leo Huberman & Paul Sweezy, Cuba, Anatomy of Revolution, Monthly Review Press, New York: 196k, p. 22.

[4] Eric R. Wolf, Op. Cit., p. 257.

[5] Eric R. Wolf, Ibid, p. 257.

[6] Eric R. Wolf, Ibid, p. 257-58.

[7] Eric R. Wolf, Ibid, p. 257-58.

[8] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, "The Cuban Revolution and the Peasantry", World Marxist Review, Vol. 8. No. 3, 1965, p. 13.

[9] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Ibid, p. 13.

[10] Gil Carl Alory, "The Peasantry in the Cuban Revolution", Cuba in Revolution (ed), 1972, p. 12.

[11] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Op. Cit., p. 14.

[12] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Ibid., p. 14.

[13] Hugh Thomas, Op. Cit., p. 1216.

[14] Hugh Thomas, Ibid., p. 1216.

[15] Robert J. Alexander, Agrarian Reform in Latin America, Mcmillan Publishing Co., Inc. 1974, p. 72.

[16] These stores are a very important part of INRA's program. They bring the advantages of mass distribution to the peasants in the form of lower prices and liberal credit priviledges. They also provide outlets for INRA's own agricultural and industrial products, thus altering INRA to the needs of the people and the state of the market and greatly facilitating the task of rational production programming.

[17] Edward Boorstein, The Economic Transformation of Cuba, Monthly Review Press, New York: 1968, p. 43-46.

[18] Michel Gutelman, Op. Cit., p. 249.

[19] Michel Gutelman, Ibid, p. 249.

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[20] Robert J. Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 80.

[21] Michel Gutelman, Op. Cit., p. 251.

[22] Michel Gutelman, Ibid., p. 252-53.

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[24] Antero Regaldo, "Credit for Small Farmers in Cuba", World Marxist Review, vol. 8, No. 3, 1965, p. 23.

[25] James F. Petra & Robert Laporte, Jr., Cultivating Revolution, N.Y. Random House, Inc., 1971, p. 336.

[26] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Op. Cit., p. 17.

[27] Lee Huberman & Paul Sweezy, Socialism in Cuba, Op. Cit., p. 144.

[28] Robert J. Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 66.

[29] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Op. Cit., p. 19.

[30] Lee Lockwood, Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967, p. 92.

[31] Robert J. Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 72.

[32] Hugh Thomas, Op. Cit., p. 1216.

[33] Leo Huberman & Paul Sweezy, Socialism in Cuba, Op. Cit., p. 105.

[34] Leo Huberman & Paul Sweezy, Ibid., p. 144.

[35] Leo Huberman & Paul Sweezy, Ibid., p. 27.

[36] Leo Huberman & Paul Sweezy, Ibid., p. 32-33.

[37] Fidel Castro, History Will Absolve Me, p. 14.

[38] Ricardo Leyva, "Health and Revolution in Cuba", Cuba in Revolution, Op. Cit., p. 470.

[39] Leo Huberman & Paul Sweezy, Op. Cit., p. 56.

[40] Ricardo Leyva, Op. Cit., p. 469-70.

[41] Ricardo Leyva, Ibid., p. 461.

[42] Fidel Castro, "The Problem of Underdevelopment", Cuba in Revolution, Op. Cit., p. 314.

Footnotes

[43] Michel Gutelman, "Cuba's Lessons on Economic Policies", Cuba in Revolution, Op. Cit., p. 234.

[44] Fidel Castro, "Report on the Cuban Economy", Cuba in Revolution, Op. Cit., p. 321.

Chapter VI

IRANIAN LAND REFORM VERSUS CUBAN LAND REFORM

Introduction

In both Iran and Cuba, as in many other so called underdeveloped countries, agriculture is and traditionally has been the largest economic sector. The rural populace which depended on agriculture for its livelihood was the largest, poorest, most lacking in education, most exploited, and most politically unorganized stratum in these two societies.

Rural underdevelopment in Iran and Cuba was the result of a number of economic, social and political factors which, over time, developed into a rigid bipolar class structure, with the peasant groups (e.g. sharecroppers, landless laborers, etc.) on the one hand and big landowners on the other. The peasants were dominated by numerically small but well organized groups of landowners, whose political power placed them among the ruling classes.

Land concentration was associated with bipolar class differentation in these two societies. Although the reason for land concentration varied, its impact was reflected in the patterns of income, distribution of wealth, the growth of tenancy, and absentee landlordism which were almost the same in both cases.

To transcend the economic, social and political underdevelopment of the agricultural population, fundamental institutional changes

are required. Especially, changes in the class structure are necessary.

Land reform can be used as a means of a re-organizing rural class structure and as a result can provide amelioration of the social conditions of the countryside.

As the analysis of the problem of land reform in Cuba and Iran showed, land reform is not so much an administrative, or even economic, as it is a political process. Land reform was used by both governments to change power relationships in their own favour. Both governments claimed land reform will bring better social conditions for the rural habitants.

As I have shown in the previous chapters, although both Iran and Cuba have chosen the same means, that is, land reform, they did not attain the same end. Cuba succeeded in ameliorating the social conditions of the countryside but Iran did not succeed in improving the social conditions of the rural populace. In some cases, as I have shown in the chapter on land reform, Iranian peasants were living in worse conditions than before.

In what follows I will try to give the reasons for the success of land reform in Cuba and its failure in Iran. I will deal with each country separately and will show that it was the different approaches in land reform which brought different results.

Obstacles in the way of successful land reform in Iran

1) In Iran land reform was a strategy that denoted the principal policies and practices that are promulgated by the Shah of Iran through the government. This policy which was carried by an individual or an old dominant class who were big landowners themselves made

the execution of real reform more difficult. It solidified the power of the previously dominant classes, perhaps slightly modified in their nature and composition.

2) The laws of land reform which determine the scope and progress of reform were passed by Parliament. In this situation, landowners were able to exert pressure both inside and outside Parliament, reform laws as such are limited in scope and totally inadequate. For example, in 1960 the land reform bill was taken to the Parliament but approval was blocked by the feudal landlords by whom the Parliament was dominated. In 1963 although the land reform law of 1960 was amended and passed by Parliament, still the influence of big landowners was obvious, especially in the second stage of land reform. In this case it is easy to understand why the land reform's institutes were from the start, or were soon to become, instruments of the traditional landed elites.

3) In the case of Iran, land was not expropriated, proprietors received cash values and peasants paid for the land rather than getting it free of charge.

When land is not expropriated and proprietors receive cash values, landowners will not be much against land reform, by which they will lose neither their position nor their dignity. They are able to sell no longer wanted land, and to invest the proceeds either in other domestic economic sectors or in profitable ventures in other countries. For example, the previous big landowners such as Farmanfarmayan, Akhavan, and including the royal families, have become the big bourgeoisie and the owners of big industries inside and outside Iran.

When peasants have to pay for the land rather than getting it free, it is obvious only rich peasants can get land and the majority is left out.

Then, land reform in Iran was not a "reform" but a business deal, a mere real estate transformation.

4) Instead of carrying out the reform program on all areas including best soils and the most fertile area, the freedom of choice was given to landlords and as a result mostly unwanted land was purchased, and redistributed.

As a result the reform redistributed only a small portion of the privately owned land, which was for the most part unfertile.

Further, by introducing "exceptions" in land reform law (e.g. mechanized lands, orchards...) distributive lands were more limited.

5) The newly distributed lands are so thinly spread that the new units are quite small (e.g. 30 per cent of those who got land received only 2 hectares). Consequently, the distributive effect on income is very limited. In this way the number of owners is increased, but the ratio between the size of large and small holdings remains. For example, the class structure in Iranian rural areas is the same as before "reform" except that a small bloc of bourgeois middle farmers is produced by "reform".

6) The implementation of land reform in Iran was very slow. This maximized the chances of land owners for marshaling enough strength to divert land reform in their own interests (e.g. considerable sabotage of the land reform by the land owners with the connivance of officials such as transfering their land to their relatives; by buying

a tractor registered their land as mechanized, etc.)

7) One of the major problems with land reform in Iran is that the redistribution of land is not followed by redistribution of water rights. This means the exploitation of water which depends on some sort of power (mostly owned by landowners) was not subject to purchase by the government nor transfered to peasants in the same way as land. As I mentioned before land is of little use without water in Iran. Leaving water rights undistributed brought about serious problems (e.g. peasants could not afford to clean the qanat; landowners in many cases did not let the peasants use the water for their lands).

8) In order for the land reform program to be promulgated efficiently, other institutions of government inside and outside agriculture should co-operated with the land reform institutions. This co-operation not only did not exist in Iran but, other organizations were either indifferent or hostile to it. For example, on the one hand, the Ministries of Agriculture, Interior and Finance were competing for control over the program. On the other hand, a new land reform department was established. Furthermore the conflict between co-operative societies, banks, gendarmerie, made the picture more complicated.

Factors facilitating promulgation of land reform in Cuba

1) In Cuba land reform was more than a marginal modification. It was preceded by profound changes in power patterns and class relations. The Cuban revolution which changed the political, economic and social power alignments, was followed by a land reform program which changed

the rules, rights, and procedures governing the land tenure system.

2) In cuba land reform abolished all latifundias; landlords were not compensated for their expropriated land, and peasants got free land.

By taking over all the large estates, the power of latifundists was abolished, and by giving free land to peasants for the first time the Cuban peasant could feel he/she is a part of the system. In this way land reform brought new stratification in rural areas.

3) The reform was carried in all areas including the best and most feritle soils. Land holdings in excess of 402.6 hectares were confiscated.

4) The expropriated land was distributed free of charge among landless peasants or those who own less than 27 hectares. Twenty seven hectares is regarded as the size of farm which is considered a "life-providing minimum" for a family of five.

5) As we saw the implementation of land reform in Cuba was fairly quick (1959-63), and was carried in two stages. The second stage was more radical than the first stage, and brought a shift in the balance between the private and state sector in favor of the state sector.

6) In the Cuban case, as a result of structural change in the country there existed a direct co-operative relationship between the land reform institutes and other agencies of the government inside and outside of agriculture. This was one of the reasons that the Cuban land reform program worked efficiently.

7) Finally, land reform in Cuba is not just a change of title of land. Care is taken to ensure that any new proprietors of the land have access to credit, technical assistance, help in marketing their products,

expanded education, better housing, better health and many other services.

Conclusion

In agrarian societies, those who control the use of land also control the economic, social and political levers of power. The land tenure system embodies those legal, contractual and customary arrangements whereby people in farming gain access to productive oppurtunities on the land. It consists of rules and procedures governing the rights, duties, liberties and exposure of individuals or groups with respect to the use and control of land and water.

Thus, as we have seen in the Cuban case, effective land reform involves more than modification at the margins. It consists of profound changes in power patterns and class relations. Land reform means to change and restructure the rules, rights, and procedures governing the land reform system. Of course, a restructuring of these rules means the change of political, economic and social power alignments, not only of the agricultural sector, but of all sections of society (i.e., Cuban revolution was followed by these structural changes).

Land reform was not successful in Iran because it was not followed by structural change. As we have seen land reform in Iran was designed and promulgated by the old ruling class who were big land owners themselves. Therefore, land reform laws were in large parts in favor of estate owners. For example, land owners were compensated for the loss of their land; all the exemptions of land reform laws was in their favor; they had the right to choose the villages,

etc.

In Iran peasants had to pay for purchasing land, which means, as we have seen, only a small bloc of rich peasants were able to obtain land. As a result land reform did affect all the rural population equally as it did in Cuba, and was not beneficial for the underprivileged majority of rural population.

Land reform in Cuba was preceded by structural change, which changed completely the class relations and mode of production. In this case land reform was promulgated under a new socio-economic structure and under a new belief and ideology. In contrast, land reform in Iran was not preceded by a structural change in the country. Therefore, land reform which is promulgated under the traditional power relationship did not change the class structure and mode of production in rural areas, but perhaps only slightly modified it. That is, only part of the strata of absentee landlord and large-scale renters were eliminated in the process of land reform; a small bloc of reactionary bourgeois farmers come into existence; and finally an army of laborers were produced by land reform. Therefore this slight modification in rural stratification not only ameliorated the condition of the majority of rural population but for the proletarian worsened their condition.

In Cuba land reform abolished the capitalist mode of production and the aim was to eliminate private ownership and the exploitation of man by man. In contrast in Iran after land reform the feudalist mode of production persisted although a capitalistic tendency has also grown up in the countryside. Therefore, still the majority of people are living in miserable conditions and are still suffering from the bad living conditions.

Land reform in Cuba succeeded in helping the peasants in the rural areas. It abolished the contradiction between rural and urban areas. Land reform was a means toward full and efficient utilization of land and human resources. It was used to bring the social conditions and income level of the rural population up to a level equal to those existing in other sectors of the economy. In short, it was a means of alleviating poverty, inequality and unemployment. Further, it changed the psychology of the people and brought a new concept of man and a strong belief in the government.

In contrast land reform in Iran did not abolish the rural-urban contradiction, but intensified it. Land reform did not bring development to the countryside. Not only did it not alleviate poverty, inequality and unemployment, but intensified it. As a result land reform brought a change of attitude towards government in the rural population. They have become cynical of the "revolutionary" promises of the government. They have faced the corrupt governmental apparatus themselves, and have found there is a close connection between the rich land owners and government. All of these along with modern communication, close contact with modern cities, and general intensifying dissatisfaction have had increasing effect on peasants' consciousness. Therefore, future politicalization of the peasantry seems likely to put an end to the traditional status of this class, and hopefully may bring the long desired structural change.

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